FROM BASEBALL TO BOCHES

H. C. WITWER

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I took one flash at her and forgot what I come to France for

FROM BASEBALL TO BOCHES

BY

H. C. WITWER

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS
BY
F. R. GRUGER AND ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO THE REASON MY STUFF IS
POSSIBLE — MY WIFE

H. C. W.

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FIRST INNING

FROM BASEBALL TO BOCHES

FIRST INNING

I

On Board S. S. ——. (We ain't allowed to tell the name, Joe, unless we get sunk.)

DEAR JOE: Well, I figure by this time the whole world and Yonkers has been dazed by the news that I have give the Alleys the best of it by joinin' the U. S. Army. They tell me the papers was full of it. I would of had my photo in one of them only the reporter sobered up on me and they was nothin' doin'.

But leavin' all humorous jokes to one side, I have gone to work and left baseball flat on its back and signed up with Uncle Sam. I got a iron-bound contract callin'

for thirty dollars a month whilst we play at home and about three dollars more on the road. All the uneyforms and stuff is throwed in free, and a feller can pick up plenty of extry dough if he 's handy with a pair of dice. On top of that we got a tour of Europe starin' us in the face, so I guess that 's bad, eh?

In the gang that 's goin' across with me is about 2,500 doughboys like myself, only not as good-lookin', and about 250 officers. A whole lot of them birds is fresh from the officers' trainin' camp. They walk around tryin' to kid the world that they know more about shot and shell than a Belgian sexton and that they take cold shrapnel showers every mornin' before breakfast. The big laugh is that they ain't none of 'em ever been closer to a battle than Rockefeller is to bein' a public charge, but they 're battin' .1000 with the dames on board just the same.

While I ain't gettin' enough money outa this thing to cause J. P. Morgan to gnash

his teeth, they 's one thing about this job — it 's steady!

No doubt you 're crazy to know how I come to get into this free-for-all in the old country, when I was a seven-to-five shot to pitch the first brawl of our own world series, the last you heard. Well, Joe, it happened all of a sudden like heart failure or one strike — know what I mean? Mac comes to me in the clubhouse one day after the Cubs has went crazy and grabbed eight runs off my world-famous slow drop in the sixth innin'. They was none out yet but me. Mac took me out.

" D' ye know where you can get a good trunk cheap? " he says.

" Well, I can't say right off the reel," I tells him. " But no doubt I could find out for you."

" Never mind about *me!* " he says. " Find out for yourself, because to-morrow I 'm gonna ship you so far back into the sticks that if they was a letter sent to you,

Robert E. Peary would be the only guy on earth that would have a chance of deliverin' it!"

"D' ye mean to say I 'm through?" I says when I got my breath.

"If I was as good a guesser as you," he says, "I would n't do nothin' but play the races. The only way you 'll ever see a big-league ball game again is with a ticket!"

"I guess I can get a free pass any time I want it!" I says, slammin' open my locker in a rage.

"Not no more," says Mac. "They ain't none left."

"What d' ye mean, they ain't none left?" I asks him.

"You give all the passes in the league away in the first innin'," he snarls. "You walked so many guys that it looked like you was gonna pitch a no-hit game!" He gets to the door of the clubhouse and turns around. "You better get yourself a couple packs of cigarettes and another collar," he

says, "because you 're gonna take a long journey."

"When do I leave?" I asks him.

"As soon as I can get hold of a piano crate, so 's I can ship you," he says.

"I suppose you figure on sendin' me to the Coast, hey?" I calls after him.

"It would serve 'em right if I did," he says, "after what they done to Hughes! The Coast, eh?" he sneers. "Say! — the Coast will be your first stop!"

"Then I ain't goin' nowheres," I hollers; "I 'll never pitch no more baseball!"

"You never have!" he yells. "Get outa my ball park!"

Of course there was nothin' a man could do after that but leave the team, hey, Joe?

I 'm passin' a score board outside of a newspaper office and I seen we had lost the game, which, of course, would be charged up to me on account of me pitchin' a plurality of the innin's. They was a big crowd lookin' at somethin' underneath, and,

thinkin' it must be the first accounts of me leavin' the club, I took a flash at it. It turned out to be a piece which said they had gone to work and called the draft at Washington. They was one number on it which made it the end of a terrible day for me. I had its twin brother in my pocket!

Just then along comes Home Run Higgins, fresh from the ball park, where he has lived up to his name by fannin' four times in four times at bat.

"What seems to be the trouble?" he says. "You look like they was gonna to be a funeral with you bein' featured in it."

"Well, it amounts to the same thing," I says. "I been drafted!"

"What?" he gasps. "Drafted? Where are you goin' to — the Phillies?"

"No," I says. "The Alleys!"

He presents me with a dumfounded stare. "D' ye mean to say you 're goin' to get into the war?" he says.

"Why not?" I asks him. "They let Siam in it the other day, did n't they?"

"Well, that 's certainly tough!" he says. "Think of missin' the world series!"

"Listen," I says. "They got a world series over in this France place that 's got the one I 'm missin' lookin' like a hot session of chess! Pershing 's gonna pitch the first game for us, and —"

"Ain't they nothin' you can claim exemption on?" he butts in. "They must be *somebody* dependin' on you!"

"Only Rube Mullins," I tells him. "No doubt he 's dependin' on me to pay him that ten bucks I owe him before I leave the team."

"Save the comedy for the trenches!" he says. "This here is a serious proposition. If you was only married now, for instance, they would n't take you."

"Why not?" I asks him. "I thought a married man knew more about scrappin' than the guy that wrote it."

"Say, looka here," he tells me, "you won't be handin' yourself none of them laughs when they start comin' at you with them bayonet things! You wanna get busy and dig up an alibi or you 'll be sayin' 'Good mornin', colonel,' in a week. If I was in your place, I 'd go down to some nice hospital and catch me a dose of pneumonia or typhoid before they 're all gone. They was some friends of mine got drafted and they would n't take 'em because they was sufferin' from somethin'. You know 'em — Eddie Harvey and Joe Kinsman; used to be with the Red Sox."

"Oh, them birds, eh?" I says. "I know what *they* was sufferin' from — cold feet and yellah fever! They ain't got enough nerve between 'em to steal a bread crumb from a dyin' ant. Why don't *you* get in the thing before they come and get you?"

To show he 's patriotic, he turns red, white, and blue.

"I tried to enlist," he stammers, "but they would n't take me."

"Have you tried goin' down to the recruitin' office when they was open?" I asks him.

"No, on the level," he says. "A guy 's gotta have a figure like this Venus to get in the war now! They claimed I had bum feet."

"What difference does that make?" I asks him. "You don't have to kick them Germans to death, do you? I thought they at least give you a gun!"

"All right," he says, "go ahead and kid while you got a chance. But there 's gonna be a lot of rainy nights in them dugouts, and if I was you I 'd save some of them laughs to break 'em up for the boys. That 's if they really take you!"

"Pershing will be tickled silly when he sees me!" I says, "and they ain't a chance of them keepin' *me* outa this mêlée now. Anybody that 's got the usual number of

arms and legs can get in it; this war 's as open as Central Park. I 'll betcha by this time next year Grant's Tomb will be the only noncombatant in the world! Why should n't I get in it? I 'm full of fightin' blood — my grandfather won the Civil War single-handed, accordin' to his own confession, and my father run the Spaniards ragged in 1898! I even got an uncle in the Salvation Army, and — "

" Hey, lay off, will you? " he hollers. " You 'll have me doin' it in a minute! If you been drafted and ain't been physically examined yet, you got a chance to enlist before they drag you out by the ear — I seen that in the paper. Now they 's a place two blocks from here where a guy can enlist and still keep from goin' in the trenches! "

" What is it? " I asks him.

" The navy, you boob! " he grins, backin' away. " Send me some postals from Berlin! "

I gotta go on guard now, Joe, at the top

of the steps to the next deck to keep the doughboys from minglin' with the first-class passengers. Accordin' to the rules, we are only allowed to fight for 'em.

Yours truly,

ED. HARMON.

(*Formly the famous southpaw.*)

II

On Board S. S. ——.

DEAR JOE: Where did I leave off? Oh, yeh! Well, I went around to the navy office, which was only five flights up because that 's as high as the buildin' was. A guy in uneyform behind a desk looks up at me as friendly as if I was double pneumonia.

"I have come to fight for Uncle Sam!" I pants, all outa breath from them stairs.

"The war is in Europe just now," he says. "Anyhow, we have filled our quota and are not taking any more men. Try the marines."

The marines was in the next block and only one more flight up in a buildin' that had no use for elevators. There is also a

guy in uneyform there, and he glares at me like I was one of his wife's relations.

"I tried to force my way into the navy," I says, "and they was full up. The manager told me to tell it to the marines, so I come here. When do I leave for France?"

"The Marine Corps is recruited to full strength!" growls this guy. "You had better try the army."

"They ain't no chance of anybody bein' laid off, is they?" I asks him.

His answer was nothin'.

By this time I was satisfied that they was a plot on foot to keep me outa Berlin, and I made up my mind I was gonna join the U. S. Army if I hadda break in with a cold chisel. I found the army recruitin' station without much trouble, because they was a soldier outside and a big picture of what the doughboys wishes life in the army really was.

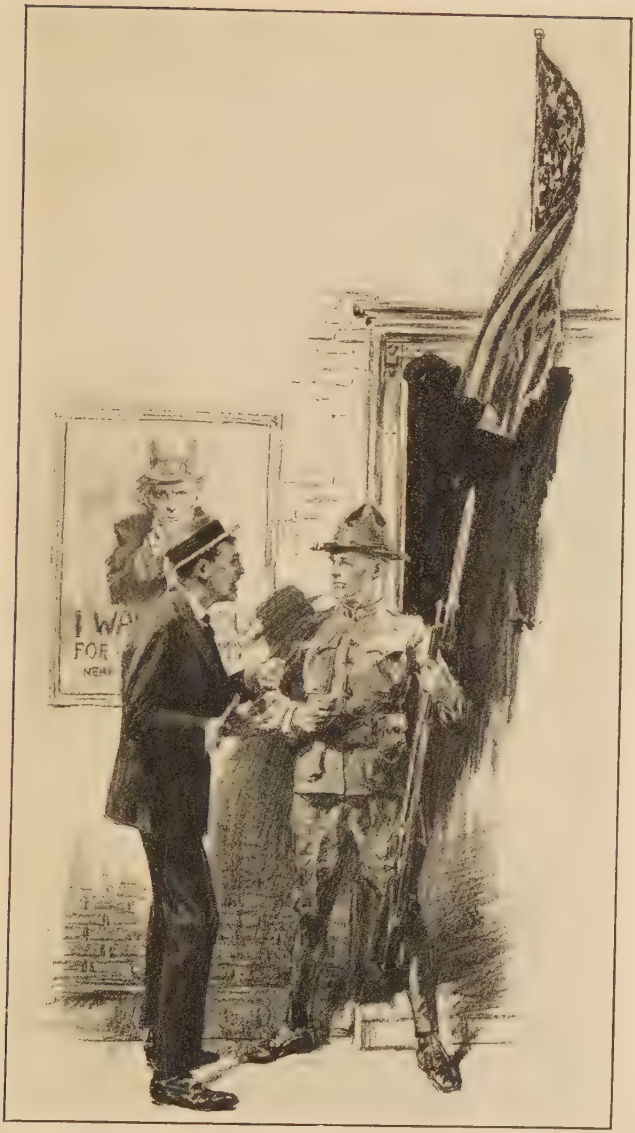
I nailed the soldier. "Where 's the guy that hires the volunteers?" I asks him. He

gimme a grin. "Wanna join up, eh?" he says. "Well, that's fine! Army life is the greatest life in the world!" He takes a short wind-up and lets go. "The food is somethin' marvelous," he says. "The livin' is elegant, the clothes is knockouts, the experience is worth money in after years, there is a great chanct to save, and—"

"Hey!" I butts in. "What are you—a capper for the army? Lay off that stuff and show me the guy that does the hirin' and firin'. I—"

"Every young man should do his bit for his country," he goes on without battin' an eye. "We gotta make the world safe for the Democrats, and then look what Belgium has went through! We—"

I grabbed him by the arm. "Listen!" I says, shuttin' him off. "Will you kindly cease that patter of yours and show me where your master is? I wanna get in this brawl in Europe before they play out the schedule!"



"I wanna get in before they play out the schedule!"

"— and last of all, remember the *Lusitania!*" he says. "You 'll find the office four flights up to your left."

"Where 's the elevator?" I says.

"It ain't!" he tells me. "You get a chanct to advance yourself mentally and physically. A willin' young feller can rise himself to be an officer if —"

I rose up to the fourth floor, three steps at a time.

There 's a bunch of guys sittin' in a room with a soldier guardin' 'em, and they look like a gang in a dentist's office waitin' their turns whilst a hysterical soprano has ten teeth pulled. The soldier gimme one look and points to a room past that. I breezed in, and there 's the young feller that poses for the male lingerie ads in the magazines sittin' at a table. He 's dressed like the recruitin' posters.

"Slip me a gun, general!" I says. "I wanna get in this quarrel."

"Sit down!" he says.

"Take off yer hat!" hisses the soldier.

I did both.

"Married?" says the officer.

"No, it ain't that," I says. "I wanna go over to Germany as quick as possible because —"

"France, you mean?" He smiles.

"Is it France?" I says. "Excuse me, I thought we was fightin' Germany. Well, that's neither here or there. Wherever it is, it don't make no difference to me; gimme a gun and —"

"Fill this out first," he interrupts, handin' me a sheet of paper, "and then we'll see."

"I don't even need a uneyform," I says. "Just gimme a gun and a couple handfuls of bullets and —"

He waves me off and points to the paper.

I give this thing the once over. It did n't want to know nothin' but the history of your life from the nursery to the undertakers. The U. S. is also interested in your

parents, and they was a lot of personal questions on it like how long since you laid off the booze and did you ever have diphtheria and why. I finally filled it out, and the officer looked it over like he wanted to learn it by heart. No doubt I had most of the answers right, for I 'm passed into another room that looked enough like a doctor's office to be one. It was.

A little guy in his shirt sleeves orders me to take off everything I had on, from the Liberty Bond button to the lucky rabbit's foot I 'm in the habit of wearin' on a string around my neck.

"Wait a minute!" I says. "No doubt I have got into the wrong joint. I got all the insurance a sane man can carry, and —"

"Strip!" bellers the little guy, which had pinched his voice from a lion somewheres. "You fellers have the idea that you 're doin' Uncle Sam a favor by enlistin', eh? I suppose you think we take

anybody and everybody. Well, we don't — understand that! You gotta be pretty fit to get a chance to do your bit in this man's army!"

Before this bird got through with me I was satisfied that a guy has not only got to be fit to get in the U. S. Army; he 's got to be lucky! This medico had me right. Like a lot of other guys, I really did feel I was doin' the country a favor by enlistin', but when they got through with me, Joe, I was proud they took me! I felt just a little better than these birds that can't get in or won't go in. I forgot all about Mac cannin' me off the team. I commenced to pity the guys that could n't get a uneyform. I throwed out my little old chest at the slight expense of two buttons off my vest. I might n't be good enough for big-league baseball, but I was good enough for Uncle Sam, and that 's good enough for me! And when this here doctor slapped me on the

back and says I 'm healthier than livin' in the mountains, it did n't do me any harm either!

The officer outside must of got a wireless that I was Three-Star stuff, because when I come out he also grabbed me by the hand and made me a present of a pleasant smile. He says I must of been brought up on nothin' but horseshoes and four-leaf clovers, because I 'm the luckiest feller he ever heard tell of, outside of Jess Willard. It seems they need twenty guys to fill out a regiment that 's goin' to the front right away, and I come along just in time to make up the set. Me and the other nineteen, which could prob'ly have fell over Niagara Falls without gettin' damp on account of bein' so lucky, is to leave for the camp in an hour. While he 's tellin' me this the phone rings.

" Hmph! " says the officer. " Some one to speak to you."

"I suppose the Kaiser has heard I enlisted," I says, feelin' in a kiddin' humor, "and he 's callin' up to ask for mercy."

He laughed like it was a new one.

Well, Joe, the guy on the phone was no less than Mac himself. Can you imagine him phonin' me? Honest, you could of knocked me over with a six-inch shell!

"Here!" he says, "I just been talkin' to Higgins, and he says you have crashed off of the water wagon. Don't do nothin' foolish. I might of been a little hasty when I give you your unconditional release, and I think I 'll start you against the Reds Thursday if —"

"Don't make me laugh!" I cuts in. "You can't start *me* against no Reds; I 'm pitchin' for Uncle Sam now!"

"You wanna stop readin' them dime novels!" he sneers. "Quit handin' the telephone operator a laugh, and come up to the hotel. I wanna talk to you —"

"Mac," I says, "all bets is off. I have

not two minutes ago signed up in the army!"

"What?" he howls. "*You* in the army? Then this here war 's nothin' but a frame-up!"

"What d' ye mean a frame-up?" I says.

"Why, you big stiff!" he yells, "if the Alleys was really tryin', would they of took you?"

I hung up on him.

I 'm writin' this letter on the ship, Joe, and we are allowed to mail 'em, but they won't be delivered till the boat reaches the other side or the bottom, whichever it turns out. Then it 's got to go through a set of glooms called censors. They call 'em that because they take all the sense outa everything a guy writes.

If you don't get this, lemme know.

Yours truly,

ED. HARMON.

(*Formly the famous southpaw.*)

III

On Board S. S. ——.

DEAR JOE: I wisht you could get a flash at this here ship which is gonna try to take us to Europe. I can't tell you the name of it, because if a doughboy mentions names in writin' back home he 's liable to get pinched, and then it 's the same as throwin' rocks at the President as far as the judge is concerned. Also I can't tell you the place we 're sailin' from, but I guess you know they ain't many ships startin' out for Europe from Phenix, Ariz., or Butte, Mont., hey?

The whole boat was painted by a set of maniac painters which was opposed to prohibition, and the foreman must of seen they was nobody died of thirst while they was on the job. There 's a swab of pink here

and a swab of blue there, and in between they got samples of chocolate, strawberry, orange, vanilla, and allied flavors. This is called camouflage and is supposed to keep the submarines from seein' the ship, and, in the event they do see it, to scare 'em away.

Amongst the bunch on board is about forty horseshoes, a hundred four-leaf clovers, a gross of rabbits' feet, and a lot of other A-1 charms to keep off torpedoes. In case them charms quit cold on us, we got an ace in the hole in the shape of a bevy of six-inch guns. I ain't knockin' the charms, Joe, but them guns look good to me!

Well, after I left the recruitin' office that day with the nineteen other lucky guys and a soldier in charge, we all got on a train and rode to the army camp. Most of the gang felt about half as good as I did, which is good enough for anybody, but they was two guys, Joe, which did nothin' but knock all the way. They claimed they was simps

for joinin' the army, and so was we; that the life was short and the food shorter, and all in all they was nothin' pleasant connected with it. They kept at it till I could n't stand it no longer.

"How did you guys come to enlist?" I says.

"We did n't!" says one of them. "We come to get some dope about bein' exempted, and the big stiff in the office talked us into joinin'."

"Sure!" says the other guy. "This country 's about as free as diamonds at Tiffany's! A man has got to fight whether he wants to or not. All them well-to-do millionaires is back of this war, and —"

"Aw, let go!" growled the soldier in charge of us.

"I think both you guys is so yellah," I remarks, "that if you was round you could pass for grapefruit! If you make any more cracks about the U. S. Army, I 'm gonna see if you 'll bounce!"

"You ain't man enough!" pipes one of the knockers.

Joe, how could I stand for a crack like that after just bein' accepted for the American army? That was not only insultin' me, but the flag too. I let him have it on the chin, and he flops on top of the soldier.

"Hey, you!" bellers the last-named party, "call your shots, will you?" He comes over and pushes me back in the seat. "Lay off!" he says. "You 'll git all the scrappin' you kin handle when we git over to France!"

"They ain't no harm in rehearsin' a little, is they?" I says.

"Shut up!" he admits.

Well, Joe, we finally got to camp, without no more bloodshed, and the first thing we run into there was another one of them popular physical examinations. Two guys was turned down. One of them was the guy I had gone to work and bounced on the

train. I did n't think I had hit him that hard.

The next thing we all got to take a bath, and it turned out they was some conscientious objectors to washin' in our midst. Them guys had to do an Annette Kellermann in front of a hose for about five minutes. That bein' done, nothin' less than a sergeant took charge of us. He told us we 'd have to get most of our trainin' on the way over to France because the regiment was expectin' to leave camp at any minute after the alarm clocks went off in Washington.

The next thing, I 'm glad to say, was breakfast.

I 'm tellin' you all this, Joe, for the simple reason that you 'll have to go through all of it when the drafters get around to your number. When you get through with my letters you 'll know just what you gotta expect, and if you don't like it, it may make some difference to the Board of Aldermen

in Calcutta; but, Joe, it won't make no difference to these guys in charge of the U. S. Army.

Well, the next stop was the Quartermaster's Department, where we was give uneyforms. You ought to see me in mine, Joe. If I say it myself, I look as good as $500 a week would look to a motorman! It fits me like an eel's skin, and it 's got that baseball uneyform I used to wear lookin' like overalls. After I had give myself the once over when I was all togged out, dressed to kill (the Germans), I felt like sittin' down and sendin' Mac a telegram, thankin' him for cannin' me off the team.

In a couple of more days they staked us to a lot of other furnishin's like blankets, shoes, overcoats, and so forth, and by the end of the week we had more stuff than the average young married couple starts out life with. Uncle Sam is sure good to his nephews, take it from me! I don't see how they can afford to give us all this stuff, and

some of these guys is livin' better right now than they ever did in their lives.

We did n't leave any minute for France, like the sergeant told us, but stalled around the camp for about a month after I joined.

I met up with a lot of regular guys here, and they was dumfounded with joy when I confessed to bein' Ed. Harmon, the famous southpaw. They would n't have it no other way but that I would pitch for their ball team when we got to France, in case we played another regiment, or the Red Cross guys, or the Germans, or, in fact, anybody, for a series.

We played one game before leavin' the camp with a team from B Company of the same regiment (I 'm in C Company). Of course I was in the box for us, and I guess I don't have to tell you who won the thing. I had nothin' on the ball but the cover, yet they only stung me for two hits. After that, first base could of been in China, for all

they knowed, and we quit in the seventh with the score 12–1, favor of us.

The whole camp seen the game, includin' the officers and the colonel, which is a nice old guy at that. He hates baseball like a chorus girl hates a telephone, and after it was all over he demanded to see me, and he says if I can put as much stuff on a bomb when I get to France, I won't be a doughboy very long. A doughboy is what they call a private in the infantry. I don't know why they call us that, because thirty-three dollars a month ain't much dough, is it, Joe?

Still, when you figure you 're gettin' food, clothes, a place to sleep, doctors, medicine, and a chance to see the world — changin' the map here and there if you don't like it the way it is now — it really looks like Uncle Sam is a sucker to pay us at all, eh?

By the time we was ready to leave camp I had learned how to march a couple dozen

different ways, salute, the manual of arms, how to keep myself and a gun clean, how to take care of my kit, and how to fire off a rifle without killin' the colonel. Every one of them things, and a lot more, looks like a cinch right off the bat, and every one of them takes about a month before you can do 'em right, and that's if you got more brains than they is in Harvard.

Well, Joe, one mornin' the orders comes from Washington for us to start on our joy ride to Berlin, and you ought to of seen the way that camp busted up. Everybody was as full of pep as an epileptic clog dancer and as happy as a dame with her first engagement ring. We was all whistlin' and singin' and joshin' each other, and even the officers was grinnin' except when they passed a private. Just before we got on the special trains the colonel made a speech that was a knockout! He said our regiment had made a name for itself here and there, and he knew we 'd be a riot once we got to

France. He also reminded us that they was other reasons for us goin' over outside of the ocean voyage and not to think this was gonna be the same as the regular monthly clambake of the Bartenders' Social Association. We was due for some rough goin', but he knew we 'd make it rougher for whatsoever blocked traffic when we was tearin' acrost France.

When he got through we give him a cheer that must of woke up cemetery inmates all over the U. S.

Then the chaplain tried out a prayer on us, and we piled into the trains the happiest bunch of guys that ever pulled on shoes. I felt the same as I did the day I fanned Cobb with a guy on third.

I ain't allowed to tell you how we got on board the ship finally without half America knowin' it, but we did, and we stuck one over on them German spies.

(Just like we 're gonna stick it over on their boss.)

I hope them censors ain't camouflagin' these letters on me.

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Formly the prominent southpaw.*)

SECOND INNING

SECOND INNING

I

On Board S. S. ——.

DEAR JOE: Well, we are out rollin' around in the deep blue now, Joe, and so far everything has been elegant. We 're plowin' along with nothin' to look at but all the water in the world. When I go out on deck and gaze around I can realize how Noah must of felt. The trip has been kinda dull, because we ain't seen a sign of a U-boat or even as much as hit a mine, but I understand things is liable to pick up when we get in the war zone, and they 's a good chance of some excitement, so we 're all tryin' to bear up until then.

I ain't been seasick a bit — that is, not very. But a lot of these guys is wishin' they

was some way of goin' across outside of on a boat, Joe.

We sneaked away from the Land of the Free a whole lot different, Joe, than the soldiers leaves for the front in novels and plays. They was no bands playin' and no weepin' and cheerin' mob to wish us the best. They was n't nobody at the dock but a couple of coppers, and we could n't even tell 'em so-long, because we hadda keep outa sight till we got out on the ocean. Some of the boys left kinda sad about that, but I guess it can't be helped. If them German spies knowed we was goin' across, they would no doubt date us up with a U-boat somewheres on the ocean.

We got so much to keep us busy on the way over that the blues or nothin' else gets a chance to hang around us. The first thing in the mornin' we get settin'-up exercises right out on the decks. You gotta take off everything but your lingerie down to your waist and go to it. Every muscle in a guy's

body gets a chance to limber up: "One, two, three, four — one, two, three four!" sings the corporal, and us doughboys moves arms, legs, and everything like the whole 2,500 of us was one man. After about a half hour of this with the air off of the ocean blowin' all over you, you feel you 'd be willin' to fight the German army all by yourself in the middle of Berlin! Also, you get an appetite that would make a Belgian refugee quit.

Then the guys which ain't standin' the trip as well as the ship is falls out for the doc to look 'em over, and the rest of us goes down and packs away a breakfast fit for a king (if they 's any kings left). They ain't nobody in the world can eat as much as a doughboy when he 's in mid-season form, which is always.

Then comes lifeboat drill. Everybody puts on one of them trick life preservers and double-quicks to his boat. Each one of them boats is supposed to hold forty-eight

doughboys if they 're good and thin. Joe, if them boats can hold forty-eight guys at one sittin', I can stop the war! Every man is supposed to go to a certain boat and sit in a certain seat, and I 'll betcha a ticket speculator would make a million the first five minutes, sellin' front rows if anything happens.

The first day we come up for the drill they was a lot of kiddin' and joshin' about it. Then the lieutenant which is in charge of our lifeboat come along. This guy's old man has got two dollars for every fish in the ocean, and if I told you his name you 'd think I had fell off the wagon again. He 's a new kind of college boy, Joe. He come from Harvard, looks like a middleweight champ, and is tougher than any doughboy on the ship. Also, he 's an ace, and we would row our lifeboat from here to Hades if he asked us!

Well, he come up while we 're laughin' and kiddin' about the drill, and he says this:

" Attention! I want you men to listen very carefully to what I 'm going to say, because I 'm only going over this once. There is very little chance of anything happening that would cause us to take to the lifeboats in earnest — but it might! If anything does happen, the signal will be five sharp blasts on the ship's whistle. You will proceed to this deck with your life preservers on and take your boat stations in an orderly manner. Upon my command, the men assigned to the oars will board, the men assigned to lowering the boats will take their positions, and the others will take their seats in the boat. There is to be no pushing and shoving, no running, and, above all, *absolute silence* from the time you leave your bunks until you enter the lifeboat!" He stops and, drawin' his gun, breaks it and shows us a handful of bullets. " I want you all to see that my revolver is loaded with ball cartridges," he says, stickin' out his jaw, *" and the first man that allows as*

much as a murmur to escape him will be shot down instantly!"

Joe, they was no more laughin' and joshin' about lifeboat drill from then on! I seen the civilian passengers goin' through the drill the other day, and they was two things I wanna tell you about. One of them handed me a laugh, and the other gimme a pain in the chest somewheres around where a guy's heart is. The first was a big fat guy comin' up on deck with a life-savin' suit on he had invented all by himself. He looked like a sea lion in the thing, and if the ship had sunk then we would all of died laughin'. They was a pocket in this suit for every nickel Rockefeller's got, and he carried water, brandy, cigarettes, biscuits, writin' paper, magazines, money, and — well, Joe, in fact, he was fitted up better than the ship was, and some guy asked him if he could buy a room and bath on him in case we got hit. It took 'em only two days to laugh this bird outa that suit, and from

then on he come up without nothin' to protect him but two life preservers.

The other thing I seen was also durin' the passengers' lifeboat drill. That was a little baby girl about four years old and as pretty as Walter Johnson's inshoot. She was goin' over with her pale little mother to see her dad, which had got wounded in the Canadian army. Here comes that little bunch of peaches and cream up on deck with a life preserver on bigger than she was and takes her place by a boat. Everybody went nutty over her, and she 's smilin' on all comers.

Joe, it was both the cutest and saddest thing I ever seen in my life. Imagine thinkin' that little darlin' baby might be in the water any minute strugglin' for her life on account of them German hell-hounds slippin' us a torpedo!

" Well," I says to myself, " if the guys in America that don't wanna scrap could see that little baby just as she is now, life preserver and all, they 'd be an army raised

overnight that would lick Germany in one afternoon! If that 's the kind of birds we 're gonna fight, I wisht I had got in this thing the mornin' it started!"

And all the other doughboys feel the same way about it!

Joe, the little kid comes and hollers down over the rail to us every day, and we can hardly wait till we get to France and get at them bums.

Her name 's Gladys, Joe, and to-day she throwed me down a cake, and, believe me, if them Germans hit this ship I ain't gonna get off of it till I see that kid and her mother is safe and sound in a lifeboat. Not even if Lieutenant —— makes good and takes a shot at me!

We 're in the war zone to-night, and if we ever get out of it my next letter will be from France.

Yours truly,

ED. HARMON.

(*Formly the sensation of baseball.*)

II

On Board S. S. ——.

DEAR JOE: Well, Uncle Sam has stole home on the Kaiser, and we ain't even got one out yet! Here we are safe and sound somewheres in the United Kingdom of Ireland and Great Britain, and they 's a flock of U-boats out in the dear old ocean, gnashin' their teeth with embarrassment. We are easin' up to the landin' stage now at a place called "An English Port." I can't tell you the real name of it, but if it 'll help your guesser any, I 'll say that practically very few ocean liners lands in London, for instance, any more.

In about twenty minutes, or an hour, or two weeks — whichever of the different reports you wanna believe — we 'll be on dry land and on our way to France, Petrograd,

Italy, Rumania, or Cripple Creek, accordin' to the inside dope we get smuggled down in the hold to us. Nobody seems to know exactly where we are gonna stop next, if at all, but tips is runnin' around as wild as rabbits.

I ain't losin' no hair over where we are goin', Joe — the main thing with me is, are we comin' back? Am I right or wrong?

The night we breezed into the war zone, we was told by our officers to sleep with our clothes and life preservers on, and if they was anybody had insomnia, now was a good chance to let it run wild. It was time wasted tellin' that to half these guys, Joe, because they was a good thousand of these watchful waiters which had n't shut an eye since we says good-by to the Statue of Liberty. No pains is spared to help you remember they 's a war in full swing. The decks is so dark at night that a guy's eyes is as much use to him as his appendix, from six o'clock on. If you light a cigarette you

get throwed in the brig, in dutch and in irons, because they claim the flicker of a match can be seen three miles away. I suppose a guy with red hair would make us a mark for a coast-defense battery in Germany, eh, Joe?

The first night we was in this war zone our decks was crowded with doughboys that wanted to do everything else in the world except sleep. From the creakin' of the decks above us I seen they was also a few officers and civilians that had decided not to drown in their bunks either.

Joe, don't giggle — you can't blame 'em! It ain't no trick at all to fight somethin' you can see, but here 's a sneakin', yellah skunk that 's liable any minute to slosh up outa the black water — like even the ocean, that 's stood for a lot, can't stand *them* on its stomach — and without no warnin', without even givin' us a chance to go to the mat with them, send us all to Hades with a torpedo! And, Joe, all you can do is wait

till you get it. That 's all — just wait and wish! Like the guy before the firin' squad with the blindfold on, waitin' to get bumped off. I don't care if a guy's name is George W. Hero, it gets on his nerves. Yes, sir!

Joe, we will get on them Huns' nerves when we get to France, now, believe me!

The second day we was in the U-boats' playground we was goin' down to mess about 7 P. M. when all of a sudden they was a terrible explosion from the side of the ship I was on. Just one great big B-A-N-G!!! — like that. "Good night!" I says to myself. "Here 's where we all get soakin' wet!"

Well, Joe, we all had our life preservers where they would do the most good, which was wrapped around our chests, and without waitin' for no command we just fell in very quiet along the deck. The modern Sherlock Holmeses in our midst figured that a U-boat had finally got us, and we 're wearin' out our listeners waitin' for the

order to abandon ship. Joe, they was n't one of us that as much as thought of startin' up them stairs till we got that command. They was n't a sound from that line of doughboys, stretched along the deck further than you could see. They was only one buck private named Windy Haskins standin' next to me, who shakes his fist out into the ocean and growls: "What d' ye know about them damn big German stiffs crabbin' a guy's supper! They better get that submarine thing away from here before *I* take to the water, because I 'm tellin' the world I can trim a Dutchman on land or sea!"

I 'll tell you right now, Joe, that army trainin' is a wonderful thing! If all us doughboys had started to mill up them stairs at once, it would of had a race riot lookin' like a chess tourney. Here it is as black as a bucket of ink and all you can hear is the naval gunners up above, scurrying around at hoarse orders from the

bridge. The civilian passengers is doin' a six-day race around the decks up there too, and I 'll betcha they was wishin' they had brung along motorcycles so 's it would n't take a whole minute to get from their state-rooms to the lifeboats.

Excitement? Oh, slightly, Joe!

But with all of this, us doughboys ain't makin' a sound or movin' a foot. For all we know we been torpedoed, but we ain't got the word to 'bandon ship yet, and until we get it we 're standin' pat! No noise or nothin', Joe, because we 're American doughboys, and it 's up to us to show them Huns that we can die the same way we can scrap. D' ye think we 'd let them German rats kid themselves that they had throwed a scare into us?

Well, there we stand, Joe, for about five minutes, and Windy Haskins whispers to me do I think the officers has forgot that we was all goin' over together? A guy in back of me giggles that we gotta take a

bath without it even bein' Saturday night, and Blutch Williams, a big corporal from Nebraska, begins to hum: "Where Do We Go from Here?"

That 's how frightened we was, Joe, and I hope them Germans sees this!

Well, I 'm thinkin' about that little baby that I told you about, Joe — up on the next deck — and thinkin' for one thing that she must be quite a young lady now, because we been standin' there a good five years — when the word comes to fall in for mess, the danger has all been done away with.

That did n't make nobody sore, and we managed to hide our disappointment as best we could. Guys that formly hated each other get as friendly as ham and eggs, and mess that night could of been called a banquet. Joe, I certainly did enjoy that meal!

No doubt you 're itchin' to know what *was* the trouble, eh? Well, I 'll tell you if it 's all the same to the censors. They

ought n't to maul this letter up, because this here has prob'ly been printed in the newspapers by now. Then, again, it shows what good care Uncle Sam takes of us on the way acrost.

We came to find out that one of our gunners (a good, steady feller, Joe, which don't know whether booze is a race horse or the name of a movie star) seen the wake of a submarine, and not carin' to take no chances he played his ace, the same bein' a six-inch gun. That was what made all the noise. If they really was a submarine, it quit like a dog, and if it really was n't, it quit anyways and passed the word down the line, because we was n't pestered no more for the rest of the trip.

The colonel comes down, Joe, right while we 're goin' to the soup and celery, and tells us how proud he is of the way we acted when it come to what looked like a showdown, and he 's gonna see that it gets as far as Washington anyways.

We presented him with three cheers, and the next course was steak.

I found out later, Joe, that they was some English officers goin' over with us, and the colonel was anxious to have 'em see that, even though we had n't gone to bat in this war yet, we could stand the gaff with anybody when it come right down to it. His orderly told us that when the gun went off the only thing that was botherin' the colonel was what we would do, us bein' away down in the cellar of the ship, where we could n't get no idea of what was comin' off. Well, Joe, the way we acted tickled the old man silly, and after that we could of had anything he had, except maybe his shoulder straps.

The last day they was a bunch of little dots appeared on the water and kept circlin' around us, gettin' bigger and bigger every minute. We thought at first they was sharks or the like, and then it looked like all the submarines in the world had come out to

knock us cold! One of our lookouts runs out to the bow and begins wavin' his arms around in the air. I thought at first he was shadow boxin' to keep warm, and then I seen he was signalin' them Things. They come closer and closer, dashin' around us this way and that, like a flock of kittens all charged up with catnip, and, Joe, we seen they was destroyers.

You never seen nothin' so comical as the way they played around us, Joe. They reminded me of a bevy of ocean-goin' flivvers!

But, oh, boy, they certainly looked good to us doughboys, which was sick and tired of this U-boat thing. We cheered back and forth till we was hoarse!

Well, I just heard we 're goin' right off the ship, and the band is up on deck playin' like the main thing was endurance. I gotta tell you about this band, Joe. They only been playin' together for three weeks, and to hear 'em you 'd never believe it. You 'd

think it was one. Half of it belongs to our regiment and the other half to another that come over with us. They was life savers to us on the way over, Joe, because they did two hours' playin' every afternoon up on the next deck. The favorite hymn of us doughboys is "Where Do We Go from Here?" but when we get to France we 'll make them Germans sing that, Joe!

Say, Joe, what d' ye know about this? The little kid I was tellin' you about comes down with her mother just now to say good-by, Joe; she is a knock-out right now, and only four years old. I 'll tell the world that fourteen years from now she 'll be standin' all the males in her precinct on their ears and makin' 'em like it! She picks me out from all that gang on board, and asks me will I send her some postals. Ain't that wonderful stuff? I can't be so bad at that, eh, Joe, when a little baby falls for me? So I tells her I 'll send her so much mail that

the postal people will think her family is runnin' a puzzle contest. And, believe me, Joe, I will!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Formly the marvelous southpaw.*)

III

Somewheres in Europe. (*I'm in France, Joe, to be on the level, but you gotta play safe on account of them censors.*)

DEAR JOE: Well, the high life is all over now, Joe, and from now on us doughboys will be busier than a tight-rope walker with St. Vitus's dance. We are in camp at a place called "a French village," rehearsin' for our first appearance in the Big Show, and we ain't aimin' to be the chorus either. It 's a whole lot like spring practice of a ball team, the season openin' with a series with the Germans. The schedule will prob'ly call for more games than they play in the National League, and they also put on games at night here too; but, Joe, we are a cinch for the pennant! They ain't got no pitchers that we can't knock all over the

lot, not even the Kaiser hisself. Them big tramps is nothin' but bushers, anyways, Joe; all they ever trimmed was teams like Belgium and so forth, which is nice fellers with a future, but after all they was n't what you could call a big-league team. At that, every game them guys played there went into extry innin's.

There is one thing over here, Joe, that we get lots of in spite of the war, and that 's rain. It was rainin' when we got into England, and it was rainin' when we got into France. It 's been rainin' ever since. But, Joe, if we ever get into Berlin, I don't care what it 's doin'! The weather man over here must have a cinch. He can hang up a sign, "Rain to-day and to-morrow," and go on a vacation for the rest of his life without hurtin' his reputation as a guesser.

They was a swell Englishwoman, Lady Whosthis or somethin', Joe, which come over and talked to us just before we went off the ship at England. She was a regular

feller, Joe, and for all an onlooker could see us doughboys could of been Lord Helpus and Duke Smixture, instead of just plain Steve Smith from Peoria and like that. She had no doubt got the idea that we was gonna spend quite a stay in England, because she told us what a knockout of a place it was and how we was all positive to thrive in the elegant climate. Everything was goin' fine, and we was kiddin' back and forth, when Windy Haskins, which claims Robert Emmet's lawyer was a relative of his and who likes England accordin'ly, butts in. The rain is comin' down in a fine mist, which is twice as bad as when it pours and be done with it.

"Is this here a sample of the beautiful English climate?" sneers Windy, pointin' out at said rain.

Lady Whosthis gets a very becomin' shade of red. She looks Windy up and down like he was somethin' the cat had dragged in, and if it had of been me, I 'd of

rather she 'd balled me out and turned them eyes somewheres else!

" Far better than the glare of your beastly American sun!" she says — a quarter's worth of ice on each word — and Windy quit!

Some comeback, eh, Joe? He did n't even get a hit off her!

Well, the first thing off the ship is the band. It lines up on the landin' stage and goes to it while we marches down the gangplank with our chins in the air, our chests out a mile, a grin on our faces, and to hell with the rain! They ain't no rain or anything else can gloom up a doughboy when he 's showin' off. They was a lot of English soldiers scattered around, and they looked us over, and we looked 'em over and let it go at that. Away down at the end of the pier was a couple of big wooden gates guarded by coppers, but they was lots of people lookin' in, and they just looked. It might of been the weather, but if they had

cheered us a bit, Joe, it would n't of made none of us sore.

Still and all, the English is different from us, Joe. They take things a lot quieter. They never get excited, or no singin' buns on, or nothin'. If you told a Englishman that London had just been taken prisoner by Texas, he 'd just say: "Thank you!" and give you a stare which would have a iceberg lookin' like a four-alarm fire. Them guys is as cool as the middle of February, and they can scrap like blue blazes too! And, Joe, when you get to know 'em, they're the greatest fellers in Europe.

We was handed a surprise when we got off the ship, because we figured we was gonna go clean through to London and stage a parade like General Pershing's gang did. After that we was gonna see is it true a soldier can have a good time in the big cities abroad. They was nothin' stirrin', Joe. We piled into a lot of special trains that was waitin', and the next thing we

knowed we 're gettin' on another ship to go acrost the Channel. We have certainly done a piece of sailin' since I seen you last, Joe. Columbus had nothin' on us!

I gotta tell you about these English trains. The first one I seen I thought to myself that if the engineer ever lost the key that winds 'em up, where would we be? They got little trick cars and an almost engine, exactly like the kind a guy brings home on Xmas for Uncle Joe's kid — get me? All the cars is divided into booths where four people can sit comfortable if they 've knowed each other a long time. But just when you 've laughed yourself sick at 'em the train pulls out, and Joe, it 's like ridin' on a race track in a limousine. Them cars is as comfortable as Rockefeller's income and as fast as a telegram!

We stopped at some burg, which I thought at first was called Coleman's Mustard on account of the signs all over the station, and a lot of kids runs up with bas-

kets of hot tea and cold sandwiches. We banged open the door of our cell, and a kid holds up a basket.

"Do you wish for some tea, sir?" pipes the kid.

"Good night!" yells Windy Haskins, fallin' back in his seat. "You gotta *wish* for it!"

Well, it turned out that the Red Cross, or the Y. M. C. A., or the Knights of Pythias, or somethin', had staked us to this tea thing, and, believe me, after that wet train ride it went big with us. It could n't of been better unless it had n't been tea, and they had give us two grains of sugar instead of one. But, then, a doughboy is never satisfied, Joe. He never gets enough of nothin' unless it 's drillin', and they ain't no shortage of that.

Joe, between you and me, I can't see the use of all the rehearsin' we 're gettin' for this war, because from what they tell me it 's all ad lib. once you go over the top,

anyways. Well, "Cheero!" as the Tommies says.

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Ex-king of the pitchers.*)

IV

Vivela, France. (*Joe, I have had to camouflage the name of this burg.*)

DEAR JOE: Well, there 's one tip I can slip you right from the front, Joe, and that 's if it don't stop rainin' over here pretty soon they 'll have to call off the war on account of wet grounds. They must be millions in the umbrella game here, and mud-pie bakers would never have to look no further for a steady job. A cold and a uneyform is the same thing in France — everybody 's got one!

Still, they ain't no use kickin'. They 's no doubt this is a tough war, but, then, it 's better than none at all — eh, Joe?

For a change, it was pourin' rain when we got into this burg, where we 're gonna be till we go to the front, but at that they

was quite a few of the merry villagers on hand to say: "Howdy!" They was mostly old men and girls, Joe, and, believe me, they was tickled silly to see us. They hollered: *"Vive les Etats-Unis!"* at us, which is the same as "Welcome to our city!" or somethin' like that, in our talk. Some of them can speak English like they studied it in Calcutta, but the laughs is split up, Joe, when we try to speak French. They was one dame standin' all by herself along the road, and, Joe, she was a knockout! If she ever comes to that dear America, her address will be the Follies, and that 's a cinch. She could n't of been five minutes over eighteen, and she had a complexion that would make a rose look like a cauliflower. When it come to figure — oh, doctor! I took one flash at her and forgot what I come to France for, also the rain and Daisy Gertner, which lives up on Lenox Ave. She happened to catch my eye, and

without no warnin' she gimme a smile that removed all the sense from outa my head.

"'Allo, Americane!" she says.

Oh, boy!

Joe, this here is some country, and what 's a little rain between friends?

The first thing I 'm gonna do is learn the language. No doubt it 'll be a cinch; anyhow, it can't be no harder than fannin' Cobb, and I done that! I feel the same way about it as Windy Haskins does. One of the second lieutenants come around to mess yesterday and says: "Do any of you men speak French?"

"I don't know," pipes Windy. "I *guess* I can. I never tried it!"

When Windy gets his next pay he 'll be short two weeks.

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*The well-known boche killer.*)

V

Camouflage, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, it has finally stopped pourin' rain, and is now only comin' down in bucketfuls. They is a rumor runnin' wild around here that it's liable to clear up any month now, but nobody takes no stock in it.

If you wanna send me anything, Joe, send me some American magazines and some cigarettes. Us doughboys would take Berlin at one sittin' for a ration of good smokin' and some hot stuff to read. The cigarettes you get here is all made of Virginia tobacco that has led a dissipated life, and if you don't light 'em, they are O. K. If you smoke one of them, right away they 's a job for the Red Cross!

I can't tell you how many of Uncle Sam's

gang is over here, or what regiments they are, or anything because the censors is workin' hard enough as it is. But it 's a world-series crowd all right, Joe, and a guy in a U. S. uneyform is as common a sight as a wave on the ocean.

And, Joe, we look like a million dollars! I stood on guard duty watchin' the artillery gang goin' through their stunts yesterday, and you 'd think every one of them boys was hand-picked! They ain't one of them that could n't give Jess Willard an argument with nothin' but a pair of gloves, and they 're all as healthy and happy as a prize baby. We have made an awful hit with the French too, and they don't mind tellin' us either. An American doughboy can have everything in France but Napoleon's tomb if he tends to his knittin' and don't get fresh.

They 's another thing I wanna tell you, Joe. A guy in the U. S. army these days is travelin' with the best crowd he ever run

around with in his life! Why, in my company alone they is four privates which owns their own autos back home, and whose people could shoot craps for a million a throw.

They is a French band here, Joe, and the drum major is a fat little guy with more dignity than a English hotel clerk. If he ever smiles, he does it in the privacy of his tent, and he would n't laugh at Chaplin. He 's staked himself to a set of whiskers that would make a lawn mower quit like a dog. A doughboy that come over with General Pershing told me the other day what gloomed this bird all up.

It seems that when the English first come to this burg the drum major had the band workin' nights so 's they 'd be able to play " God Save the King " the minute the Tommies come on the field. Well, they got away with it, and it went big with them homesick English. Then they sent down some French infantry, and, of course, the

band played the life outa the "Marseillaise." Fine, two on — none out! Well, Joe, when the bandmaster was tipped off that the Americans was comin', he run around like a headless duck. He wanted to do the thing up brown, and he had no more idea of what our national hymn was than I have of what a boss plumber gets in Afghanistan. He was a thousand miles up in the air, but game as they make 'em, and they was no quit connected with him. They was n't much time to lose, so he casts pride to the breeze and asks a Canadian officer if he knew what they stood up in the theatres for in America. This guy had been to the United States, and he thinks it over for a minute and then brightens up.

"Sure!" he says, "the American national anthem goes like this!" And he whistles it to the band for a week.

Well, the day Pershing's bunch come there the band was all set. The drum major had polished up his whiskers, and his chest

was out from here to Paris. The English troops line up on one side and the French on the other. It was as solemn as twenty years in Sing Sing when everybody presents arms, and they was n't a giggle within twenty miles of the camp. With General Pershing at the head, the American troops swing into the field.

Bing — Bang — Zam!!! The French band strikes up the American national anthem as tipped them by the Canadian officer, and oh, lady! Them doughboys liked to snickered themselves sick, and even Pershing was seen to grin once!

The band was playin' "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here!" and all them birds takes off their Kellys and comes to salute for it!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Formly the notorious pitcher.*)

VI

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, I suppose you're dyin' to know how we're livin' here, if such is the case, and how I am makin' out with the language, when for all you know I don't speak nothin' but the English.

Joe, we are livin' like chorus girls, and don't let none of them soreheads tell you no different. We sleep in what is called billets, the same bein' nice, dry barns, and so forth, as clean as a rabbit's tooth. Of course, now and then they is a rat or so drops in to look us over, but it's all in the game, Joe, ain't it?

The first thing we did when we got here was to police everything in sight. Joe, to police somethin' in the army don't mean to pinch some guy; police in the army is the

same as a White Wing in New York. Police means clean up, remove, and burn, and we made this French burg think it had been hit by a soap cyclone! We carted away all their garbage for 'em, purified the water, and made everything so neat that a guy could eat a meal off any given road in the village when we got through. At first these natives thought we had gone nutty, and some of 'em got sore because they thought maybe we would wind up by givin' 'em baths or somethin'. But now they are used to it, Joe, and take it all in fun.

They 's a little store here that sells American matches, groceries, canned stuff, and, in fact, everything but American booze. That dame I met on the road waits on the counter, and the store 's doin' more business than a guy with the ice-cream-soda concession would do in Hades. Her name is "Jeanne," Joe, and she 's gonna teach me French in exchange for English. She already learned me one gag in French; it is

"*Ma chérie,*" which is the same as "Oh, you kid!" in English. Prob'ly the whole next letter I write you will be in French. I 'm learnin' that fast!

The money here is hard to figure. You give 'em ten dollars American, and you get back all you and anybody you got with you can cart away on a truck, in French money. It 's called mostly francs and centimes. A centime is nothin' at all, Joe, but a franc is about eighteen cents in our money. For ten of 'em you can get everything but elected president of France, includin' champagne.

All our food, practically, comes from the U. S., and the other day a French officer says if we can fight like we can eat, the war 's as good as over!

As far as speakin' the language is concerned, I expect to have it mastered in a couple of days more, because Jeanne is some teacher. I already speak French like a native — of Phoenix, Ariz. — but I have borrehed a book on it from the top sergeant

and am makin' great headway. Say, won't I be a riot when I come back, bein' able to pitch in two languages? If an umpire calls a rotten decision on me, I can waltz up to the plate and knock him silly with somethin' like this:

"*Merci, monsieur!* — where d' ye get that stuff, you big fathead! — *voulez-vous, très bien état voitre!*"

I don't know what half that is myself, Joe. I just grabbed it offhand outa the book. But it 's class, ain't it?

I seen General Pershing to-day, but the picture was in a French paper, and they was too much ink on it.

Well, *au revoir, ma chérie,* as we remark in the trenches!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*The famous globe trotter.*)

THIRD INNING

THIRD INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: No doubt you will be surprised to see that we ain't in Berlin yet, and here we been in Europe over a month. Well, Joe, it ain't because the U. S. Army is stallin' around shootin' crap or nothin' like that — we 're busier than a guy with St. Vitus's dance tryin' out a pair of roller skates. They ain't a minute that we ain't bein' showed a new way to commit felonious assault on them Germans, and we now know how to kill 'em in practically all the up-to-date ways, except by mailin' 'em poison ivy, maybe, or somethin' like that.

The billet which I sleep in with about forty-five other doughboys is claimed to be a haunted house. It was formly a church

and was built about the last time the St. Looey Reds win the pennant, or about 1160 A. D. (Admiral Dewey). Every time they pull off a war in this here burg the church gets the worst of it. The last time they was shot and shell in their midst here the church lost everything but its religion.

Well, Joe, we slept there three or four days, and we did n't see no ghosts, as advertised. We met up with about everything else, though, durin' the course of the evenin', and a guy with a line of insect powder would of sold out the first three minutes. Finally last night, sure enough, along comes a couple of ghosts, and me and Windy Haskins killed 'em deader than Napoleon. Joe, they was the biggest rats I even seen in my life!

Speakin' of rats, I never have met up with none like these babies over here. They don't understand nothin' but French, and they ain't afraid of no man, Joe. They used to come in the billet at night and sit up on

their hind legs right in the middle of the floor, givin' us the once over. If you 'd holler at 'em, they 'd never turn a hair, but instead they 'd sneer at you and commence wavin' their whiskers up and down, like they was Chaplin and tryin' to get a laugh. Well, they come in and kid us that way for a few nights, and Windy Haskins says they would be a fortune in it for a guy that would train a troupe of 'em and take 'em back with him in vaudeville. Shorty Greer says that 's a *rattlin'* good idea and the gang howled. But I don't see no laugh in that, do you, Joe? It 's prob'ly another one of them Ford jokes, hey?

Well, anyways, Windy Haskins gets acquainted with one of them rats and christens it — (I can't tell you the name, Joe, them censors won't stand for no names.) He claims he 's gonna take it all the way to the front with him as a mascot. He buys cheese for it, and the thing comes in every night to get fed like a bum at the back door

with a hard-luck story. It 's got a set of ferocious teeth and whiskers from here to Denver, and, Joe, when it grins at you they ain't no man can keep shivers from chasin' up and down his back! Well, one night it brings in a friend, and the first thing you know the two of 'em gets scrappin' over a piece of cheese. They mauled each other all over the floor while the gang all stands around sickin' 'em at each other and bettin' which one would quit first. In about two minutes Windy's rat gets sick and tired of fightin' and wants to call it a day, but the other rat can't see into it and keeps on tryin'. Windy reaches down to save his little chum from bein' assassinated, and, Joe, it give a squeal and bites its first name in Windy's thumb.

"What d' ye mean?" howls Windy at the rat, grabbin' his thumb and dancin' around. "Is that what I get for all I done for you? Did n't you ever hear about gratitude?"

" Ask it if it ever heard the one about the barber which come home late," hollers Shorty Greer.

The gang is laughin' themselves sick, and them rats prances off to one side, wavin' their whiskers up and down at Windy. They was a big French cat come wanderin' in the door about then, and them two rats remembered a date they had in South Africa, and they was no time to lose. Joe, they would had to of had motorcycles to leave that cat flat, and in a minute it 's two out and none on. They was all played out from fightin' each other, and that cat was n't even extended.

I hope this here gets past the censor, Joe. I 'm takin' a chance at that, because it 's against the rules to send back accounts of fights. Still, neither of them rats was in uneyform, so I guess it 's O. K.

Joe, be careful what you write over to me or else I won't get your letter at all. They was one guy got a letter this mornin'

which was five pages long, and he got all set to read the gang the latest from Battle Creek, or East Aurora, or wherever he come from. On the outside it says, "Opened by Censor," and on the inside — oh, boy! — they was the followin':

"DEAR HARRY:

"Your loving sister. — MAY."

In between was nothin' at all. Tie that one!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Ex-Czar of the ball park.*)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: They was a sensational thing happened here this mornin', and if it takes my last drop of ink I 'm gonna rush the news over to the anxious millions in America. It come off so sudden that half of us can hardly believe it, and the merry villagers is goin' around shakin' their heads, like Heaven knows what 'll happen next since the Americans come over.

On the level, Joe — *it stopped rainin'!*

The finish of this here forty-two years' downpour was a knockout. They was thunder and lightnin' enough to suit the most particular, and Niagara Falls would of looked like a sprinklin' can alongside of what hit us. In fact, Joe, if they had that last rainstorm at Coney Island it would

cost a dime to see it and they 'd call it " The End of the World." It was so bad that the officers and instructors laid off of us and we did n't have nothin' to do all afternoon but sit around and catch cold.

Havin' settled the war between ourselves to the satisfaction of everybody but each other, we get talkin' about the world series. The scores was wirelessed over to all the American base camps, so you see Uncle Sam is pretty good to his help at that, eh? Well, Joe, believe me, us doughboys bet everything but our left ears on that brawl between the White Sox and the Giants. If Heinie Zimmerman had n't thought he was in the Russian army and did that piece of runnin' with Eddie Collins, I would of won fifty bucks or 2,500 centimes, but as it turned out I won't be able to do nothin' that takes money for a month.

Well, we was havin' a fannin' bee about the thing, and Al Hall, which has a country place on Third Avenue and bet on the

Giants for that reason, claims McGraw's team was doped when they started the series.

"They never was a day when Chicago could beat New York at marbles, ticktacktoe, or baseball!" he hollers, gettin' excited. "Them guys put somethin' in the field when the Giants come out there, and that's what beat McGraw."

"You know it!" yells Red McClure, which is a rabid Chicagoan from Jacksonville, Fla. "You bet they put somethin' in the field to beat the Giants — they put the White Sox in, you big stiff!"

Joe, it was a good scrap while it lasted and helped break up the afternoon and Red McClure's nose.

After we have brung the gladiators around to where they can recognize close friends, I went over to the grocery store to get my regular French lesson from Jeanne. Remember me tellin' you about that peach of a dame which gimme the kind eye when

we blowed into this burg? Well, that 's Jeanne. Joe, her name is Jeanne right now, but in no time at all it 's gonna be Mrs. Edward Edison Harmon! I 'll tell the world fair that she 's got more aces than a pinochle deck, and when I bring her back home the movin'-picture people will be fightin' each other in the streets to get her name to a contract. The musical comedies will be offerin' her sums that 'll startle Europe. Say, Joe, this dame 's so good-lookin' she don't look real, and every time she passes here they 's an epidemic of twisted neck all along the line. I don't think no more of her than I do of my right lung, and while she ain't promised to be mine as yet, she ain't complainin' about me to the police either. The percentage is a little against me on account of me not speakin' the French very good, but she 's teachin' me so fast I 'm liable to bust right out talkin' it any minute. She 's pickin' up English like she was born on Seventh Avenue, but

I can't get her to pronounce my name right. The nearest she can come to it is "*Ma Chérie!*" instead of Ed, but the way she says it, Joe, I ain't got no kick comin'!

The French doughboy — they call 'em *poilus,* Joe — drags down the sensational sum of a nickel a day for fightin', and it ain't no wonder they 're such boss scrappers. I guess they get so sore every time they think about their wages that they 're ready to fight anybody at the drop of a hat. I told Jeanne that I drawed down a little over five francs every twenty-four hours, and her eyes pops out till you could of knocked 'em off with a cane. I 'll betcha she thinks now I must be the black sheep of the Rockefeller family, hey?

But, Joe, I 'm on the level about this marryin' thing, and me and Jeanne is gonna have a flat over in Brooklyn as soon as we put the skids under the Kaiser. Believe me, Germany will be askin' waivers on that big stiff before we have played 'em more

than two games. That guy is gonna wild pitch himself off the earth like the Czar of Russia did, which the last I heard he 's workin' as a White Wing in Siberia.

Joe, there is a lot of doughboys like me over here now and a lot of Jeannes to make up the set. They might n't be as good-lookin' as the one I drawed, but I would n't tell none of the gang that. Anyhow, if me and Jeanne gets married we 're gonna have plenty of company. These here French peaches has took to the doughboys like a baby takes to bawlin', and the doughboys has come right back strong! Quite a few of these dames has little places of their own, farms and like that, and it costs next to nothin' to live here. So you can see that a lot of these guys is figurin' that, while they might n't come home with the Kaiser's thumb to prove they took Berlin, they 're gonna come home married or else they 'll stay here and grow up with the country.

Joe, I 'll save one for you if you want me

to, but you 'll have to hustle over here because they 're goin' fast. If you had a chance to wed a swell-lookin' dame which thought you was a four-time knockout on account of you havin' come all the way from the *Etat Unis* in uneyform, if she had a nice little farm with everything on it but a mortgage and all you had to do was ask her, what would *you* do?

Well, Joe—that 's what they 're *all* doin'!

They was a slew of letters come in to-day for our gang, and everybody got one except me. I got two. They must of been a thousand sacks of mail, and I 'll bet they heard us cheerin' it in Tampa. Joe, they ain't nothin' better you can send us over here than a letter all filled up with stuff about what our friends is doin' and whether they are still votin' for mayor back home or do they match coins for the job these days? This stuff may not seem important to you, but it 's turkey to us doughboys which is far from the dear old *Etat Unis;* so, Joe, don't

forget to write! The cigarettes and the mufflers knit by lovin' hands which is sent to us is great, and you know we are thankful for 'em, but if them that can't or won't come over here and take a chance wants to make themselves solid with the doughboys, tell 'em to get a lot of clean, white paper, take their pens in hand and just let the ink run wild!

One of the letters I got is from no less than Mac, which if he had n't canned me off his club I 'd never of been over here — as quick as this. He claims the boys is all gonna chip together outa their world-series dough and send me somethin' for Xmas and what would I wish to have?

Joe, I don't have to consult my lawyer or nothin' like that to tell 'em what I want, because I been all set for somebody to ask me for a long time. I 'd like to have all the old newspapers them guys can lay their hands on, so 's I can read what has took place since I left. I wanna read all the

dope about the world series even if I do know the winner and how much is silk neckties at Stacy's — not that I can get none — and if they is any murders, robberies, and the like — good and hot — so much the better. Any one of us, Joe, would give five bucks American for a United States newspaper right now, and the date is the last thing we 'd find fault with!

The next thing I 'd like to have is a piano case full of cigarettes, because they ain't no way of tellin' whether they got some in Berlin or not and the ones you get here ain't fit for man or beast.

If they is any change left after that, I want one of them trick wrist watches, and if you laugh, Joe, you are all wrong! I know what you 're thinkin', the same as I used to think before I joined the war, and that 's that any he-man which wore the right time on his wrist also took in sewin' or somethin' like that and it 's a cinch his name was at least Percy. Part of the lay-

out was one of them sport shirts with the free-love collar, remember? Well, that dope don't go now, Joe. Everybody in uneyform over here — officers and doughboys both — wears wrist watches. They 're handy and convenient too. For instance, take a cold day when you wanna see if it 's time to kill a German or not. Instead of openin' your overcoat and gettin' half undressed to look at your watch, all you gotta do is shove out your arm like you was jabbin' a guy, and there you are, half past six or a quarter to two, whatever the case may be — or the works. The toughest roughnecks which ever thought a guy that used a napkin was showin' off is wearin' wrist watches now, and a year ago they would of killed you dead if you 'd of give 'em one. So you see how the war has changed everything — eh, Joe?

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Makin' the world safe for the Democrats.*)

III

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, we have just come in and knocked off for the day after about ten hours' manual labor at learnin' the national game of Europe, the same bein' "Sock the Kaiser!" No doubt you 're itchin' to know just how we go about it, so if the censor will gimme a chance, I 'll tell you. They is a lot of stuff which even *I* got brains enough to leave out, because it might tip off them German spies, but most of it I can tell you because it 'll be in the papers anyways.

The first thing every mornin' over here is gettin' up outa bed, so you see we are like the French in a great many ways. That 's the principal one. This happens practically in the middle of the night, 5.15 A.M.

to be exact, and, believe me, Joe, that 's a terrible time for the Big Ben to go off! But, like everything else, you get used to it, and half a hour after that we open up the hatchways and take in breakfast. Boy, it is *some* meal, and my sympathies is with you birds which is not over here to get it! Well, that bein' off our minds, we do a piece of chambermaid work around our billet, and then we are all set for the first lesson.

We march away from the village just like we was goin' into the real thing, and all the kids, girls, and old guys stands along the road cheerin' us off. Joe, they think we 're a knockout, and every time us doughboys makes a move they drop everything they are doin' and stand around watchin' us, grinnin' like hyenas. Well, we go hikin' along like that, singin' to beat the band. Every company has got its favorite song, and when we all get goin' together it sounds like the Metropolitan Opera Co. gone crazy! But singin' is great stuff for keepin'

up the doughboy's pep, Joe. The French is strong for singin' too, only they got a lot of songs which the battle field is the only place you can sing 'em without police interference. I don't mean they are all like that, Joe; they get some that are real class, and you don't sing 'em, you weep 'em out loud.

Well, Joe, we hoof it along the roads singin', and after a while we get to Killem College, you might say, and then school is open for the day. Our teachers is both French and English, and they is a sprinklin' of birds that can speak both languages with either hand, so 's that everything won't get all balled up. Joe, our officers has to study lessons and mind teacher, the same as us doughboys do.

The first thing they put us at was diggin' trenches, and in about a hour, Joe, everything was all tore up till it looked like Broadway and made me homesick. Windy Haskins says they ought to of let us take

this course by mail, and it would n't of made none of us sore if they had, Joe! Well, we keep swingin' these picks and shovels till many of us got the idea we was gonna *dig* our way to Berlin, and finally somebody took mercy on us and called it off.

We had hardly got done laughin' with joy at our first job when a couple of these French guys which know more about war than the guy that wrote it took us in charge, and we are introduced into the mysteries of makin' barbed-wire fronts for our future homes. Joe, this here is some stunt! They is only two things on earth can go through one of these entanglements, and they are a six-inch shell and Houdini. I 'll betcha he could n't do it with no handcuffs on neither, Joe. That 's *one* that would beat him! The idea of these things is to make the guy which is rushin' your trench sick and tired of life in the army, and meanwhile you come out and keep his mind off the races and so forth, with your baynet.

Well, the next thing on the menu is throwin' grenades. Joe, when I come back I ought to be a cinch for a job with some anarchists, because I take my hat off to no man when it comes to heavin' a bomb! I have got all my old speed and control back, Joe, and I can burn these things over faster and farther than any man in my squad. When it comes to control, I betcha I could hit a gnat in the eye with one of these things at two miles! The little French guy which is teachin' us pats me on the back only yesterday, shows me every tooth in his head, and remarks: "But monseer is the bomb throwaire of the most excellent, *viola!*"

"You know it!" I says, "I admit it freely. I 'll tell the world they ain't none of them Germans gonna get a hit off of me. You think I 'm the sugar now, eh? Well, you ought to of seen me a couple of years ago!"

"But yes, *mon ami!*" he says, shakin' his head and gazin' over at where all the U. S.

doughboys is practicin', "we would veree much like to have see all of you, two years ago!"

It took me a half hour to get it, Joe. What d' ye think of that for a comeback?

Well, I gotta tell you what them grenades are. They look somethin' like a dill pickle, and the main idea of them is to bean Germans with. But at that, Joe, you don't have to *hit* nobody with 'em; all you gotta do is make 'em land in the same *state* with a guy you don't like, and practically right away the population is reduced by at least one. You creep over to the German trenches with a handful of these and holler: "Is they anybody home?" The Germans says "Yes," and then you throw your bomb and make a liar outa them!

At first I had quite a time throwin' these things, all though they ought to of been my dish, seein' what a notorious pitcher I was. But they balled me all up, Joe, because a guy can't take no wind-up before throwin'

them. Right before you let 'em go you have started the motor goin', and you get about five seconds leeway before they go off. Joe, they don't wanna be no glue on your hands neither, because if you hold 'em too long they ain't no doctor livin' can do you a bit of good.

And if you throw 'em too quick they 's a chance that the Germans will run in from center, take 'em on the fly, and heave 'em back at you before them bombs has made good!

Windy Haskins horned his way in with a bunch that was bein' trained on machine guns, Joe, and what d' ye think the lucky fathead did? When it come his turn to work the gun he looks it over kinda careless like, and the first thing you know he begins takin' the thing apart like him and it had been brung up together. The French instructor smiles at our lieutenant as much as to say: "Look at the poor boob! He would n't be able to put that together again

if he had it in his own garage!" Our lieutenant frowns because he thinks Windy's gonna show the world what a lotta simps we are, and it makes him sore. Well, Joe, when Windy has got this thing so separated that the factory which made it would disown it, he picks up a piece here and there and, holdin' 'em out to the French officer, he asks a few questions. This bird can speak English, and he answers right up, lookin' very interested and losin' the grin off his face. Joe, inside of five minutes, French, Windy's got that gun together again, and they ain't one nail left over. He drops down, throws it into position at the targets, and cuts loose. Bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing!!!

Joe, that target looked like a Swiss cheese except for one or two bullets which went wild and hit the other one in the bull's-eye!

Well, our lieutenant grins like a tooth-powder ad, and the French instructor

rushes over and would of kissed Windy, only Windy is fast on his feet. I guess them French guys thinks we ain't such dubs at that now, eh? It made the whole bunch of us solid for life with the lieutenant, which informed Windy he was O. K. and would n't lose a thing by what he has just did. He did n't. They put him in charge of a machine-gun squad and made him a corporal.

And here I am nothin' but a buck private, and I been in the army goin' on four months!

Well, Joe, here comes Jeanne with some jelly for me (they make it in this burg), and me and this pen is gonna part right now! If you could get a flash at her and some of the other fair sex in this man's town, they ain't nothin' on earth could keep you out of a U. S. uneyform.

Joe, don't wait till they get round to you in the draft; come on over, they 's a lot of your friends here. Remember Red Seever, which used to be with St. Looey, Cleveland,

Jersey City, and the Athletics? He was a speed merchant, Joe, and could do everything with a baseball but pitch it over a plate. He once hurled one consecutive innin' against the White Sox, and everybody got a hit but the umpires. Well, I had no idea he was in the army till I met up with him here the other day. After we have lied to each other about how we are gettin' along, I asked him how he liked it.

"Ed," he says, "never mind about that. But they 's one thing — I 'm in the U. S. Army now, and this is the first winner I ever been with in my life!"

He told it; eh, Joe?

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Uncle Sam's strongest hope.*)

IV

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I would of wrote you a letter yesterday only I was busier than a water plug at a four-alarm fire. I assassinated about a dozen of them Germans, includin' the Kaiser, the crown prince, and this here Hindenburg guy. They can hardly claim I 'm layin' down on the job after that; eh, Joe? No doubt you may get the idea that I 'm tryin' to kid you about this wholesale manslaughter, or have become a opium fiend, but far be it from such. I killed all them guys, Joe, with nothin' but a baynet, and when I got done killin' 'em Windy Haskins killed 'em and then Blutch Cooper and about a hundred other guys killed 'em, and if they ain't dead it 's nobody's fault but their own, Joe.

The only thing is, Joe, these guys we cleaned up was nothin' but dummies painted to look like the real thing. We went at 'em for about an hour with the instructors eggin' us on, and it was the same as a sure-enough battle only they was more noise. You know they is more to usin' a baynet, Joe, than merely stabbin' a guy. They must be all of a million ways of fightin' with it, and the guy which had us in charge had n't forgot none of 'em either. Also they is special places you have got to pick out to carve on the other guy so that when you get him you get him good, and you gotta know how to stab so 's you won't leave the baynet stickin' in him. If you did that, Joe, he could run away with it and leave you flat, and I 'll bet them Germans has captured many a baynet that way; eh, Joe? Them birds would steal anything!

Well, by the time this instructor laid off of us I knowed more about baynet fightin' than he did. I must of, because

he says he did n't think he 'd ever be able to teach me anything.

Joe, when you come over here, which you prob'ly will pretty soon, don't make the mistake that a lot of us guys did when we first come over. Don't go around braggin' and blowin' to these French and English guys what a wonderful place America is alongside of their country and how we're gonna finish a job that was too tough for them to handle. That stuff don't go, Joe, and it 's all wrong! We 're all gonna finish them Germans together and the Alleys ain't lookin' for the U. S. to step in and knock the Kaiser cold with one wallop. If we simply hold our end up, they won't be no kick comin' from nobody — except maybe Germany.

The reason I tip you off about this, Joe, is so 's you won't get in wrong like some of the guys did that come over first. Imagine doughboys, which the toughest fight they ever had was gettin' up early in the

mornin', mixin' around with French and English guys which had four years of bombs, bullets, baynets, gas, mud, and a worse hell than any minister ever told about, and them fatheads would pull somethin' like this: "Well, you guys could n't handle the thing, so *we* come over to save the game for you in the ninth!"

Joe, them English birds would just give 'em the North Pole stare, and the French guys would look a little hurt, but they was too polite to say nothin'. Now that stuff is raw, and you know it, and besides it 's liable to make them guys think we 're all a lot of four-flushers. Our officers soon put the locks on that kind of talk, and we 're all mixin' over here now like ham and eggs. When we seen them guys fresh from the trenches goin' through their stunts and showin' us what to do, we realized pretty quick that they was the boss scrappers of the world, and we felt like a lotta boobs for thinkin' we was the only meat in the stew.

We got right down to business and put everything we had into pickin' the game up, and we made good so quick that we are solid over here for life. So don't you guys queer it when you come over — d' ye get me?

I know you got too much brains to talk yourself in wrong, Joe; that 's why I 'm warnin' you in advance.

Well, speakin' of baynets, Joe, you ought to of seen this here practice — it was a riot, believe me! All these dummies is lined up, and we come out of a trench on the run and shove these here baynets into 'em. They was an English sergeant instructin' us, and this bird had been simply poison to the German army, from what he admitted doin' to 'em with his baynet. He was a husky little guy, as hard as nails and as serious as a shortage of air in a balloon. The first time we come runnin' out, we was all laughin' and kiddin' while we jabbed them dummies, because, Joe, they was somethin' comical about a lot of adults rushin' at them

painted things and tryin' to ruin 'em for life like they was real. On the level, it was more like havin' a laughin' bun on than anything else! Windy Haskins leaps on top of his dummy, and the two of them rolls over on the ground and down into a trench. The gang is in hysterics, and, Joe, we are all clownin' this thing and havin' fun galore, as the feller says. Outside of the dummies, they 's only one guy that ain't laughin', and that 's this here English sergeant. He gazes at us like he 's satisfied we 've all gone nutty and then he calls us to attention in a voice that would of scared a lion to death!

"Lor' lumme!" he says. "'Ave we a blarsted circus 'ere? You men h'ain't supposed to h'entertain the 'Uns; you 're supposed to kill 'em!"

"Don't get sore!" grins Windy Haskins; "it 's all fun, anyways, and —"

Oh, boy!

Joe, that sergeant just naturally went nutty, and for the next five minutes we got

bawled out for your life. But they was no reason for it, Joe. On the level, we was n't tryin' to kid this guy; it was just our good spirits — get me? You know how us Americans is — always full of life and like that. We all like laughs and I 'll betcha a doughboy would think nothin' of tellin' a German the latest funny story like the one about the good-natured guy in the barber shop, the while lettin' him have the baynet through the ribs — get me?

Well, Joe, the sergeant went and got a couple of our officers, after he got through moanin' at us, and we was told the glad tidin's that on account of us havin' such a wonderful sense of humor we would all be fined two weeks' pay and see if we could get a laugh outa that!

Then, Joe, we was took over to where a bunch of Australians was trainin' some of their own gang, and we was told to keep quiet and watch so 's we could see just how to do this thing. I won't forget that for a

long time, Joe, and it took all the laugh outa us, believe me! They was nothin' funny connected with them guys' idea of playin' with the baynet. No, Joe — this here was the real thing!

An officer gives the command, and, boy, you should of seen them babies pilin' outa the trench on the run. Not only seen them, Joe, but *heard* 'em! They ain't no gun livin' could drown 'em out when they get hittin' on all cylinders, and the yells they give is somethin' to raise hair on a bald-headed guy's dome! They ain't ordinary yells, Joe, like "Oh, boy!" or "Hurray!" Oh, no — them guys scream till you can feel the blood kinda quiverin' in your veins. They claim their yells is the way a lotta different wild animals howls in Australia when they got jumpin' toothache or somethin' — can you tie that? Well, Joe, they crash into them dummies, and all you can see is the swish and flash of the baynets in the sun.

"Come on!" bawls their instructor. "Clean killin' is what we want! Kill 'em sweet and clean! Wipe the Huns off the map! Cooo—eeeeee!!!"

Oh, doctor! Biff — Bang — Zam! Over goes the first line of dummies, and them guys is chargin' into the next, yellin' like devils from below. Every one of them birds, Joe, is built like a heavyweight champ, and when they go into action they are stripped to the waist. They don't hear no commands to halt till they ain't a livin' thing left in front of them. They are sure some scrappers, Joe, and the Germans don't care to play with them at all!

Joe, I can hear them guys yellin' yet!

Well, when they got through, us doughboys looked at each other very serious and throwed out our chests. *That's* the way it was done, eh? Well, we 'd make them guys proud to fight alongside of us before *we* got through!

The English sergeant takes us back to

where our dummies was, and we pile down into the trench again, a different set of guys than we was before. They ain't no kiddin' among those present this time, Joe, and it 's all we can do to wait till we get the command. I sneaked a look around, and every one of us looks like he was goin' after a guy that had insulted his girl or put sawdust in his tobacco. We 're a pretty tough-lookin' gang.

" Advance — go! " barks the sergeant.

Oh, doctor!

Joe, I 'm tellin' you they never was no baynet charge seen before like the one we pulled off right then and there! In three minutes we have gone through three lines of dummies, howlin' and cussin' like wild animals and tearin' up the earth like six-inch shells. We did n't leave no dummies or nothin' else standin', and if this sergeant and a lotta other officers had n't run after us, bellerin' for us to halt, we would of gone right on through to Berlin and points west

without no stops. They was n't nobody that was n't bruised or scratched up a bit, and most of us had to be pulled off them dummies by hand. The Australians stopped to watch us and, Joe, they throwed up their hats and cheered till they was black in the face. That there charge of ours put new life in the whole camp, and the little English sergeant comes puffin' up, grinnin' from ear to ear. (The first time I ever seen him crack a smile!)

"Lor' lumme!" he pants. "That 's the way to fight, my lads — you bloomin', murderin' Yanks!"

That 's us, Joe!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*A bloomin', murderin' Yank.*)

V

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I hope by this time you have remembered that America is not only your address, but it 's your country and the place you make your livin' — and have got inside a U. S. uneyform. I hope you ain't one of them guys which claims they would fight in a minute if the war was n't so inconvenient to get to, but if the Germans ever commenced beatin' in the front door of their flat, they would be the first ones to take offense. Joe, it 's a good thing for them birds that the draft come along, because us guys that come over first would of mauled 'em when we came back anyways.

Joe, remember Jeanne, the dame I fondly hope to wed one of these days? Well, me

and she is gettin' along now like J. P. Morgan and a bank. She 's gettin' prettier every second and, on the level, every time I look at her it 's the same as gettin' beaned with Walter Johnson's fast one as far as my brains is concerned. What a man wants to drink for when he can look at a dame like this and get the same kick they is in gin is past me! Even Windy Haskins, which thinks nobody or nothin' on earth is on the level, admits that Jeanne is champion good looker of the world. Only, he says, the girl 's insane.

"What d' ye mean, insane?" I hollers, gettin' ready to nail him.

"Well, I 'll leave it to any twelve guys in the world," he says, "if a dame like that can see her way clear to stall around with *you,* she 's short of somethin', ain't she?"

I let him get away with it, Joe, because I seen then it was nothin' but a case of jealousy, and, besides that, this Haskins guy is bigger than Boston.

But what I started to tell you was this here, Joe. I went around to Jeanne's farm when I 'm off for a few hours, and I 'm takin' life easy by choppin' wood for what 's left of her family. I ain't put more than three blisters on my hands when I happen to look up, and there 's Jeanne with some bird in a French uneyform. Jeanne is smilin' that million-dollar smile, and her new-found friend is tryin' to assassinate me cold with one look. He 's the smallest officer in the deck — a second lieutenant in the French army — and he 's got a medal on his chest for every hair in my head. Joe, I 'll give you ten guesses how I felt, and you can save nine of them for future use. I dropped that ax right then and there, and I felt like some doctor had just told me I had three minutes to live and *that* only if I cut out fast livin'.

Well, Joe, the French guy turns to Jeanne and cuts loose with a volley of adjectives, nouns, and verbs, waggin' his shoulders and

I'm tryin' to figure whether to bean this sweetheart of Jeanne's and prob'ly cause a war

shadow-boxin' with his hands at the same time. I don't say a word — I ain't got none ready. I 'm tryin' to figure whether to bean this old sweetheart of Jeanne's, and prob'ly cause a war between us and France, or to quit like a dog and beat it. He keeps on spillin' chatter a mile a minute, and although he 's usin' French, a guy from South Africa could see that what he was callin' me would never of made my parents stuck up. This gets my goat, and I reach back in my hip pocket and yank out that " French While You Wait " we all carry and try to folley him. Joe, they ain't a thing doin'! This bird 's got a world of speed, even if he is shy on control. Finally, nature could stand no more, and he quit for breath. In butts Jeanne, gettin' as red as a stick of lip rouge. She says somethin' in French to this guy, noddin' and smilin' the while. I don't know what she said, but it went big with the newcomer, because he swings around on me, and, Joe, I 'm a son of a gun

if he don't kiss me right smack on the cheek before I can lift a hand to defend myself!

Jeanne brightens right up and laughs. "*Soit, mon frère!*" she says to me, pointing at him.

That don't tell me nothin', and I 'm lookin' in the book for a comeback when the gentle stranger chimes in. "*C'est le vôtre!*" he says to me, grinning like a wolf and slappin' me on the back.

"Wait a minute!" I hollers, gettin' excited and openin' the book to the first page I come to. I figure I 'll pull a *little* French on him anyways, so 's he won't think I 'm no dummy. "*Je ne sais pas nager!*" I answers him, and they both look kinda puzzled. Then I seen right underneath that is the English, and it means "I don't know how to swim," which ain't got nothin' to do with the subject, and this guy must think I 'm a nut. By this time I 'm wild, Joe, and also makin' a boob outa myself, so I throwed this French book in a ditch and

prepared to beat it, a broken-hearted guy for your life! But Jeanne grabs me by the arm, still laughin'.

"But, *mon chéri*," she says, "you do not the comprehend. This it is my brother."

Oh, boy!

Joe, if I 'd of been a woman, I 'd of prob'ly fainted with joy; as it was, I can't say nothin' but look what I felt, which no doubt was ample, because Jeanne lays her hand on my arm and gimme a little pinch — they was a glance went with it that would of killed a guy with a weak heart. She then explains to her brother that I can't speak the French, but they 's worse than me at that. So the brother laughs and says for one thing, they 's a lot of me, anyways. From then on we spoke nothin' but broken English and crushed French, her brother knowin' quite a few English words, havin' once been a hotel clerk in Havre. He 's in the Aviation Department now, and had come home on leave. I thought from the

medals he had on he must of been leadin' the band, but I found out he won 'em on the level in open competition with the rest of the French army. He turned out to be a regular guy, Joe, and we went up to the house and had a shot of *vin ordinaire,* which is short for wine, only this kind ain't never been in the same room with alcohol. You can drink a barrel of it without it goin' to your head, and it costs next to nothin'.

They 's just one thing I wanna say about me and the French language, Joe. I thought at first I 'd pick the thing up in a coupla lessons like checkers or ice hockey, but I 'll be on the level with you, Joe; I don't speak it now, and I won't speak it never! They ain't no guy on earth but a Frenchman ever gets where he can talk it right, and you can't learn it from no book no more than you can learn plumbin' by telephone. No, sir! You can't study French — it 's a gift!

The French has got our talk figured as

bein' different from the English, Joe. They 's a sign in Jeanne's grocery store that handed me a giggle, so I 'll pass it along to you. This is what it says:

" English Spoken Here."

" American Understood."

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*First in war, first in peace, 101st Infantry.*)

VI

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, we have just got a pay here, and I got a roll that would choke a gnat. I ain't kickin' though, and, anyways, for sixty-two cents over here a guy can have all the fun he can stand. And, Joe, these birds which are on leave is havin' it too, now, believe me! I 'm stickin' all mine into Liberty Bonds because I figure on gettin' married quite shortly. I have swore off all my bad habits except whistlin' before breakfast, which is really bad luck and not a bad habit.

Joe, an American with a bank roll is a knock-out to the French people. They stand around and watch us throw away our dough, grinnin' from here to Milwaukee, like a rich father watchin' his only daughter

tryin' to buy Fifth Avenue in one matinée. They love us Americans all right, but love and business don't play on the same team, so it 's always open season for Americans over here. They sure know how to put the bee on you too, Joe, believe me! Still and all, why should n't they? Don't we do the same thing to foreigners from Newark and Peoria, right on Broadway, N. Y.? Joe, an American lays himself open to be taken. He never kicks about no prices, but pays whatever it says on the check, the while lookin' sore because it ain't higher. He buys a lotta junk that ain't no good to nobody, even the natives, which is the reason they sell it.

Joe, these doughboys are out now provin' that the souvenir game is as good as any on earth for gate receipts. They are gettin' postal cards, ash trays, pin racks, hairpin holders, flags, medals — well, anything that can prove it 's absolutely useless is as good as sold. The French have a sayin' here

which is very popular; it shows what nuts they think we are as far as money is concerned:

"The Germans fight for greed.

"The French fight for their country.

"The Americans fight for souvenirs!"

What d'ye know about that, eh, Joe? But they don't mean to knock us by that. They say it with a smile, because we're overgrown kids to them.

The doughboys ain't the only Americans that tries to make France the richest country in the world, either, Joe. I went into a store here with a newspaper guy from the U. S., and he wanted to buy somethin' to send back to his girl, or his folks, or the iceman, or somethin'. He come nearer to speakin' French than most of us do, and he does all his shoppin' in that tongue, gettin' away with it clean. He picks out a lotta junk and asks for the check, when he happens to pipe an almost-silver jewel box up on a shelf. He has it taken down and gives it one short look.

" How much? " he asks the storekeeper.

The modern Jesse James behind the counter sets himself.

" Twenty francs, monsieur! " he says.

" Right! " says stupid, and the guy behind the counter did n't even have a gun!

We 're just goin' out with the bundle, when the boss, prob'ly needin' some more *vin ordinaire* or somethin', runs over to the door. " Monsieur would to like it maybe some of the Parisian silk to send to that Amérique? " he says.

The sucker is dumfounded.

" How do you know I 'm an American? " he asks, thinkin' he had made the Frenchman feel he was born in Paris.

" But it is the easy! " grins the Frenchman. " From the very way monsieur makes the purchase. *Tiens* — I will the explain! A Frenchman comes to here and wave the finger at something. ' How much? ' he inquire. ' Ten francs,' I tell him. ' Little pig, I will give you three! ' he answer. An

Englishman comes in to the buy. 'How much?' he ask of me. 'Ten francs,' I say. 'It is of the extraordinaire high!' he say and *Viola*, he walk the out. Now, see — enter an Amérique (oh, that dear *Etat Unis!*). 'How much?' ask this grand, gallant fellow. 'Forty francs!' I say, with the smile of the pleasant. 'It is expensive, but —' 'What the hell do I care how much it is?' he interrupt to inquire. 'Wrap up four of them; I 'll take 'em all!'"

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Do you want anything from Berlin?*)

FOURTH INNING

FOURTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, we are finally lookin' at the war from the orchestra. Our outfit went up last night to relieve them French birds in the front-row trenches, and they all went out like guys at intermission to get a smoke, or a glass of cracked ice, or somethin'. The only difference is, they don't figure on comin' back right away to see the rest of the show, havin' give their door checks to us.

No doubt you got the idea that we shook hands and cheered each other and prob'ly drank toasts and the like, but such was not the case. I don't see how nobody can drink toast anyways, unless maybe milk toast; heh, Joe? However, that ain't here or there —

the idea is, we went in and they went out without so much as a grin bein' exchanged between us. The relief come off at night, and it was as dark as a club flush and rainin' as usual. They 's one thing you can always figure on in France, and that 's rain. They may be short of everything else, Joe, but they 's always plenty of that. Sometimes in the restaurants over here they try to pass it off as soup, or coffee *au lait,* or *vin ordinaire* (a burlesque on wine); but, Joe, it 's rain all right, no matter what they call it! I have drunk it and had it pour on me in the streets, and I know what I 'm talkin' about, Joe!

Well, we relieved these guys one by one and I says to the bird I relieved: "How far away is the Germans, kid?"

"I no speak not the Américain," he whispers. "How many soldiers from the *Etat Unis* are there now in France?"

"Eleven million!" I hisses back, seein' he would n't tell me nothin' — "not countin' me."

"*Sacrebleu!*" he remarks, and went on his way.

Well, Joe, as a matter of fact, they ain't over thirty cents in a taxicab distance between us and the Germans. The space that keeps us apart is called No Man's Land, and from where I sit it looks more like one of them Long Island real-estate swindles than anything else. You know, them places where the agent meets you at the train in a rowboat and takes you out to see the plot they have awarded you for your subscription. "Buy a plot of ground here and own your own home — somewheres else." One of them kind of things; get me? They is young mountains of mud, barbed wire, used bullets and shells, lakes, helmets, horses which died game and is still the same way, and holes known to the trade as shell craters, which is deep enough to bury the German army in and sooner or later will do the same.

We eased into them trenches as quiet as

possible, so 's the Germans would n't get wise to the fact that they 'd go to bat against American doughboys the next time they got to mixin' it. We was to be in the nature of an unpleasant surprise. We had n't been in there five minutes, Joe, before Hades bust loose! They must of doped it out in some way, because shells come over by the barrelful for about an hour. They give us everything they had from soup to nuts, and the noise would of made a boiler factory sound like a deaf-and-dumb prayer meetin'. As far as I could find out, none of our outfit got beaned, but whilst none of us was scared, Joe, I must say we realized we had come to the war at last. Yes, *sir!*

We come back at 'em for a while, playin' trump every time they led it, and pretty soon they called it a day and laid off. Us doughboys naturally thought the next thing on the bill of fare would be one of them grand, smashin' dashes over the well-known top, but such was not the case. We was all

set for the charge of the light brigade and so forth, but instead we was each presented with a pick and shovel and put to work on the thrillin' job of repairin' trenches, where they had been knocked out of true by shells.

Joe, we been doin' that ever since we been up here, and they is certainly a lot of sore guys in our outfit which is champin' on the bit to be heroes and they is nothin' stirrin'.

We was give a supply of gas masks and steel trench helmets before we come up here and also a complete outfit of winter scenery to keep us good and warm. Joe, it gets as cold as a half a dollar's worth of ice in these here trenches after a day's rain, but we are fixed up now so 's that even if a blizzard come along we could laugh at it. To show that our heart 's in the right place, we make it good and hot for the Germans too, this chilly weather, by throwin' shells over at 'em, day in and day out.

Nobody knew we was comin' up to the front, with the exception of everybody in

the camp, until almost the last minute. The first real tip off was when they served out the identification tags. These is little lead medals which you wear around your neck, and on 'em it 's got your name, outfit, nearest relative, and why — and a lot of other interestin' facts and figures about a guy, so 's that in case you accidentally bump into a bullet you get due credit for same. Then they was a lot of orders give out which it 's no use repeatin' here because none of the censors is blind.

Well, Joe, of course the first thing I did was to sneak over and tell Jeanne fare-thee-well, for the time bein'. I must of wrote about this dame before, Joe, because she 's better-lookin' than Alexander's inshoot in August, and ever since I got my first flash at her I wanted to give her the honor of openin' my mail and stallin' the landlord for me. I hustled over to the little grocery store she runs in this French burg where we was stoppin', and there 's one of our

doughboys standin' there kiddin' with her. "I wanna speak to you in private, Jeanne," I says to her. "Give this hick the gate!"

"It has come the time for you to leave, *mon ami,*" she tells him, presentin' *me* with a smile that would make anything in the Follies quit.

This big stiff turns around and gimme a sneer. "First come, first served!" he says. "I 'll leave when I 'm good and ready!"

"I don't know how *good* you are," I says, "but you 're *ready* right now!"

Well, Joe, we went to it, whilst the fair Jeanne looks on without lendin' a hand to either of us. Instead of screamin' and faintin' like the ordinary dame would do, they is some more roses come into her cheeks, and her eyes sparkles till you could of set either one of them in a ring and hocked it for a million francs. This guy was willin', but what he knowed about box fightin' could of been wrote on a gnat's ear,

and in about three minutes, French time, I knocked him kickin'.

"I ain't no pig!" he exclaims from the floor. "I know when I got enough. I 'm through!"

I help him get up, and Jeanne went so far as to wipe off his face with the smallest handkerchief in the world. We shook hands all around, and he bought a deck of lemon drops and beat it.

"Ah, but you are of the very brave!" says Jeanne to me. "You are of the hero, *mon chéri,* you —"

"I admit it," I says, cuttin' in. "Listen — I don't know if I 'm of the hero or not, but I 'm gonna get a chance to find out right away. We go up to the front to-night!"

Joe, she gets as white as a pint of milk for a second, and I seen one little hand grip the counter till you could see the white bones through. Like ivory under satin, it looked to me, Joe. Then — zip! — back comes that complexion which would make

her a million a week if she 'd sign cans of it — and she 's grinnin' at me.

" Ah! " she says, " for three years we wait for this! the *bon Dieu* has hear France — " She grabs up a little American flag I had give her and waves it. " *Vive la Etat Unis!* " she hollers. " *Vive la France!* "

I 'm tellin' you right now, Joe, and I ain't ashamed to admit it, that the way she said *that* made me tingle all over, like when the leadin' man throws the villain over the cliff in the movies; get me? I felt like I could lick the German army all by myself if but give a chance, and when Jeanne leans over that counter and kisses me, I *knowed* I could lick 'em!

" Jeanne," I says, " I ain't got much time. I come up here to ask you a favor before I go away to make the Kaiser sick and tired of the war. It ain't very much I 'm askin', but it means a whole lot to me. Will you do it? "

Joe, somebody must of tipped her off.

She gets as red as a four-alarm fire and examines a box of matches like it 's the first one she ever seen in her life. She says nothin'.

It 's gettin' late.

"Well," I says, usin' nerve I never knowed I had in me and puttin' my arm around her — "what d' ye say, Jeanne? Will you do me the favor?"

"For you, *mon chéri*," she says, turnin' that million-franc smile on me — "for you I give — what shall I say to you? — I give my right arm!"

I took a long wind-up and put everything I had on the ball.

"It ain't enough!" I says. "Jeanne, what d' ye say if we get — Say, listen! I ain't no J. P. Morgan or nothin' like that, but I got a roll stuck away, back in the dear old *Etat Unis,* that would make the national debt of Portugal sound like the score in a no-hit game! When the war 's over and I go back to baseball, I can drag down six

thousand berries a year for pitchin'. If you don't like that, we can open a delicatessen or somethin'. I — you — well, this ain't gettin' me nowheres. To get right down to it, what I want you to do is — Say, Jeanne — let 's get married, heh? "

Oh, boy! Now that I have got it off my chest, I feel like I have been beaned by Johnson or somebody, and my heart 's tryin' to climb right out through my ribs. All Jeanne did was to drop the box of matches on the floor and put both her hands on my shoulders. She 's gotta stand on tiptoe to do it, Joe, and she looks at me like I 'm New York and she 's gettin' her first peep.

" But yes! " she whispers — so low that I gotta bend down to hear it.

Well, Joe, there we stand! My head 's goin' around and around, and I 'm shakin' like a steam drill. I feel like I have fanned Cobb with three on in the world series, and they ain't no eighty-six Germans livin' that

I could n't of cleaned up right then and there! I seen it was up to me to break the embarrassin' silence. "Thanks!" I says. Joe, it was the only thing I could think of.

Jeanne drops her hands and turns away, and I seen in some way I had made a wild pitch, Joe, without knowin' just how I did it. "You — you love me?" she says.

"Oh, fluently," I tells her; "I 'll tell the world fair that —"

"But — but you do not tell *me* that!" she whispers. "You —"

Joe, I went over the top for the first time! I 'm back of that counter in one jump and — well, Joe, what we did and said ain't no man's business, but speakin' of me lovin' Jeanne, we got *that* all settled, anyways!

Joe, you can mail me your congratulations and tell the world I 'm a married man. Father McCarty, our chaplain, did the trick five minutes before we marched away to the trenches, and the whole outfit seen us

get wed. They certainly was a lotta soreheads in our midst when them guys seen what I had grabbed off for myself, when they might of done the same thing, but they cheered up and made the best of it. Windy Haskins wanted to kiss the bride, and in fact they was a general epidemic of wishes along them lines, but Jeanne seen that it was n't goin' big with me, and she ducks into the house, blowin' kisses at 'em with her hand instead.

Our captain is an ace, Joe, and he sends for me about ten minutes afterward.

"Harmon," he says, "I have good reports about you from Sergeant Wayne, and I 'll keep an eye on you from now on. You have something to make good for now, and I hope you 'll take advantage of the incentive. When we take over the trenches at —— there will be a vacancy for a corporal in your company. The promotion will come strictly on merits, and it 's up to you!" He looks at his watch. "You have fifteen

minutes before it will be time to fall in," he remarks.

"Yes, sir," I says. "Is they somethin' you want me to do?"

He gave a snort, Joe.

"Don't you think you can say good-by to your wife in fifteen minutes?" he yells.

"Oh!" I hollers, "I got you — I mean, excuse me, sir — I 'll be right back!"

Joe, was n't he a regular guy to gimme a chance to have a fond fare-you-well with my newly made bride?

I never would of thought of it!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(Don't forget to tell the gang I 'm wed — we could use some silver when I get back.)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, who do you think I met up with here yesterday? No less than Slim White, which only a couple of years ago the Cubs give five thousand berries and three outfielders for. Remember how he used to slam the old pill all over the lot and how he could beat a telegram goin' around the bags? Well, he 's in the aviation now, and we had a great little fannin' bee. I reminded him of me bein' the first pitcher he went up against in the big league and how I made him fan on three pitched balls, and he remembered how he nicked me for a triple in Chicago when they was a runner on each bag. Neither of which things ever happened, as you know, Joe. He says bein' in the Aviation Corps

is great because it keeps a guy out in the open air. He also claims he knows every bolt and nut on his machine personally. He says the wings is made in one place, the motor in another, the wires somewheres else, and so on. He ain't sure, he says, but he thinks the propeller is made in Russia, because it certainly reminds him of it, anyways.

I fell. "What d' ye mean the propeller reminds you of Russia?" I asks him.

"Two thousand revolutions a minute!" he says.

Joe, can you imagine that guy tryin' to kid *me?*

I asked him how he come to get in the army, and the big hick says it was on account of the raffle they had in Washington last summer.

"Raffle?" I says. "You mean the draft, don't you?"

"I thought it was a raffle," he says. "Anyways, Ed, my number was 258, and I

won it! I drawed a free trip to Europe for the first prize, and that 's the only raffle I ever won in my life!"

I got to tell you about Father McCarty, Joe, which same is our chaplain and the guy which married me and Jeanne. He is one regular guy, and the whole outfit would go through Hades to get him a light if he asked it. It don't make no difference what religion you use, if any; you can't help likin' this guy. We got all kinds of nationalities in our company too, and the roll call sounds like takin' inventory at Ellis Island. Father McCarty pulls one at mess this A. M. that the gang is laughin' about yet. You know, Joe, it is Friday, and that is meatless day for the Catholics. Well, we ain't got a thing for breakfast but bacon, and they 's a young Jewish guy named Marcowitz — which is an ace himself — watchin' the cooks throwin' this bacon up and down in the pan. He 's standin' there all gloomed up, when along comes Father McCarty and

gets a flash at him. They both look at that bacon in the pan, and then they look at each other.

"Is that bacon all we have for breakfast to-day?" says Father McCarty to Marcowitz. . . .

"Yes, sir," says Marcowitz, turnin' away from the pan in disgust.

"Hmph!" grins Father McCarty, slappin' him on the back. "Well, son, it's a tough mornin' for both of us, eh?"

Well, Joe, we are still performin' with the pick and shovel, repairin' trenches and the like. The whole outfit is crazy to go to the mat with these here *boches,* as they call 'em here, and every time an orderly comes along with an order from the post commander, we all jump up, hopin' that he's bringin' the word for us to go over and chase them guys all the way to Berlin. Even the officers is sore, though of course they don't show it out loud like us doughboys does.

It 's a funny thing, Joe, but you hardly ever hear the word Germans over here. The English call 'em 'Uns, the French call 'em boches, we call 'em squareheads, and what the Belgians call 'em would never get past no censor, but I will say that it 's nothin' that would make them Germans stuck on themselves.

We got a little excitement last night when a squad of us went out in No Man's Land to repair some barbed-wire entanglements. The Germans is always entertainin' us by sendin' up rockets and star shells, which make it like broad daylight when they bust in the air. Well, we ain't been out there a minute when them birds spots us and cuts loose. Joe, it rained bullets for about five minutes, and we all laid flat on the ground and hoped for the best. Windy Haskins sticks his head up for a look, and away goes his hat full of lead. We could n't even come back at them, because they was only a dozen of us against half the German army for all

we knowed, and if we had fired a shot, it would of showed them exactly where we was and then we 'd all of been prob'ly sayin': "So this is the Red Cross?" in the mornin'. After a while we crawled back like snakes to our own trenches, and they was n't nobody got hit. They was four holes in Windy Haskins's hat, and he claims he would n't take five hundred bucks for it.

"With evidence like this here," he says, holdin' up the hat, "I can make the boss liar of the village quit like a dog when I go home!"

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Have you got a uneyform on you yet?*)

III

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I suppose by this time the papers over there has been full of it and the good old *Etat Unis* knows we are in the war, sure enough. You know what I mean; I mean that raid which them Germans pulled off on us, takin' twelve doughboys prisoners and removin' three others from the pay roll. Joe, one of the guys they captured was Windy Haskins, and I 'll betcha before they got him licked he put a good dozen of them squareheads under the lilies. That bird never give up while he could stand on one foot, and when he comes to life again, wherever they took him, he 'll make 'em wish to Heaven they had let him go his way in peace!

They ain't no use moanin' over spilt milk,

Joe, but them guys simply caught us nappin' and worked the double steal on us — that 's all! As long as it must of been in the papers, I 'll tell you how it come off, or as much of it as the law allows, anyway.

The night this thing is pulled, it's pourin' rain as usual, and on top of that they is a fog so thick that you could n't see your hand in front of you if you had an electric light on each finger. We get orders to move up into a new trench which is much further towards the Germans than we been yet and relieve the French guys there. The thing is pulled off as quiet as a church funeral, and we are just gettin' acquainted with our new home when, Joe, Hades busts loose!

Them Germans put everything they had on the ball, and I 'll betcha for an hour they throwed each and every kind of shell they had in stock right into us. They banged away in front of us so 's we could n't come over the top and run 'em ragged, and they throwed shells in back of us so 's the rest of

our guys and the French could n't come to the rescue. They was a curtain of fire all around us, Joe, that no livin' thing could get past, and from then on we are on our own, with nothin' but a chance to show the world how an American doughboy can scrap!

Well, Joe, there we are like a guy on an iceberg floatin' around in the middle of the ocean and night comin' on. Our officers, which has never been under fire before any more than we have, is as cool as the middle of February, and we are ordered to take cover in the dugouts while they try to get word through to the French to open up with them 75-centimeter babies. A shell hits under the observation post, and good-by telephone. The next thing we knowed the Germans is jumpin' down into the trench, yellin' like maniacs to keep up their nerve.

Joe, this was our dish, and we went to it — every man for himself and the guy that

goes down loses. You wanna remember that it was pitch dark and you could n't tell one guy from another. Them yellah squareheads cashed in on this by yellin' out every now and then in first-class English that they was Americans, and when a doughboy would lower his baynet, thinkin' he was up against one of his own bunch, them German tramps would let him have it.

Well, I don't think the whole brawl lasted over ten minutes, but take it from me, Joe, while it was goin' on we was the busiest guys in Europe. It was our first time up against the real thing, and every doughboy was in there tryin', now, believe me! Right from the go in, Joe, we all knowed we did n't have a Chinaman's chance, because we was cut off from all outside interference, and the best we could do was to die game, and take as many of them Germans along with us as possible.

One of them hand grenades makes good in back of Windy Haskins, and me and he

both went down cold. I got a splinter in the back, and when I come to life I found I could n't get no further than my knees for quite some time. A guy takes a dive beside me, and I grabbed his automatic which made a pair with my own, and, Joe, I just cut loose with both of 'em until I run outa ammunition.

Windy is only shook up a little from that bomb, and he gets to his feet yellin' like a bat from below. They was three Germans come at us, and Windy drops the first with the prettiest left hook to the jaw I ever seen. He did n't even have a gun, it havin' been blowed outa his hands by the bomb, but a little thing like that don't slow Windy up a foot. He dives into the other one, grabbin' him by the throat. I dropped the third with a lucky shot, but the guy Windy bounced comes to and bends a gun over his head. Then some more squareheads comes rushin' up and drags Windy away. That 's the last I ever seen of him, Joe, because

from then on I was busy lookin' after the health of George W. Me.

Me and a couple of other guys beat our way back to a dugout. We ain't no more than crawled in it when a shell hit it and blowed it all the way to South Bend, for all I know. We was all knocked flat, and one of these guys got his in the arm. He throwed his gun away, not bein' able to use it, and, grabbin' off the baynet, he used it like a sword. Makin' our way along the trench, we run across some more doughboys; and, seein' me leadin' the way, they took me for an officer, and, Joe, I did n't correct 'em, but took charge instead.

One of these birds is a kid about nineteen. I never seen a guy so mad in all my life. He says they have took his pal prisoner, and he suggests that half a dozen of us charge the German trenches on our own hook and after killin' a few hundred of 'em bring back some generals as pets for Pershing.

I had my hands full keepin' that kid from goin' through with his scheme, too, Joe!

Well, we hear a lot of guys climbin' down over the top of the trench, and we don't know whether they 're Americans or not. I challenge them, and their answer is a shower of them hand grenades which same reduced our party by four. The rest of us dropped to our knees and opened fire with rifles, and, Joe, they is at least two of them squareheads which will never go around braggin' about that raid, in the streets of Berlin. We kept pourin' good old American lead into 'em for a couple of minutes, and pretty soon they got enough and went away from there, draggin' their wounded with 'em.

We went on further up the trench, firin' as we went, and finally an officer comes along and orders us back in the dugouts.

This guy was a first lieutenant and he was n't a minute over twenty-one years old

at the outside. He 's been banged on the head, and one arm is hangin' very stiff; but, Joe, he 's as steady as if we 're on dress parade. He sees that we all get in the dug-out first, and he 's just startin' after us when a shell hit about ten feet away.

Joe, that was the last I knowed until the next mornin' when I found I had been hit in the back and shoulder, and also I was a corporal!

I guess that 's poor, or somethin' like that, eh? Can you imagine me with stripes on my arm and guys under me, Joe? Why, say — them Germans can come every night and welcome if I 'm gonna get promoted on each visit; eh, Joe?

The medico says I 'll be all right in a couple of weeks and ready to take another crack at them Germans; and, Joe, believe me, I certainly will do the same!

All us guys which come out of the raid is simply nutty to get back at 'em. We ain't moanin', Joe, over havin' lost the first pot

— we 're as good losers as anybody on earth. They stuck one over on us, and we hand it to 'em for doin' it; but, Joe, believe me, they 'll be a different box score when we go up against them guys again! They had the edge on us forty ways, and you know it, because they been in this quarrel for four years and we just sat in the game. They had this thing doped out for months, and they was four Germans to every one of us when they come jumpin' in that trench, but at that we put up an argument that I 'll betcha they won't forget over Sunday! I 'm glad I was in it, because I 'm a better soldier than I was before.

And I 'm out for blood now, Joe, and so is all of the gang that was in the thing. It was better for us than ten years of this trainin' thing where the battles is all faked, and I guess it was pretty near worth what it cost us. It was hot stuff while it lasted, but when you figure what it did for us in experi-

ence — why, we took out a lot more than we put in, Joe.

For every doughboy that them guys took we 'll take twenty Germans, Joe, and we won't stop tryin' till we lead the mob into Berlin!

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Married, wounded, and a corporal so far.*)

FIFTH INNING

FIFTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I got them cigarettes and newspapers to-day, and I must say that you have made yourself solid with me for life. I split the pills fifty-fifty with my squad, and I 'll betcha them guys would pay more attention to me right now than they would to Pershing. They is a waiting line from here to Milwaukee for a flash at the newspapers, which was close to a month old when they got here, and I am the envy of prob'ly half the American army.

You know, Joe, that my heart was always bigger than Boston, but them doughboys will have to gnash their teeth and wait till I get through readin'. Why, I have barely

gone over them newspapers a dozen times, so far, givin' nothin' but a scant day to the baseball dope.

I see they was a case of intoxication come to light in New York. Is that on the level, Joe?

Well, I am out of the hospital now, with nothin' but a couple of scars on my back and a couple of stripes on my sleeve to show I was among them present when the Germans pulled off that raid on us. Joe, Rockefeller is just $2.75 shy of havin' enough money to buy any part of 'em!

The French guys is tickled to death at the scrap we put up the first night the squareheads come over. Even the English officers which is here, and which would n't get excited if the Kaiser committed suicide, gives us credit for bein' able to take a punch without slowin' up. But, Joe, they is somethin' else us doughboys can do besides bein' able to *take* it, and that 's bein' able to *deliver* a wallop, which same we will do the

minute *we* go to bat against them birds. They grabbed a few hits off us in their half of the innin', but when we play a return date with 'em and pull off *our* raid, we 'll make 'em holler for the cops, believe me!

Why, Joe, us doughboys which form'ly looked on this brawl over here as a kind of tick-tack-toe tourney is goin' around like lions at the zoo ten minutes before they bring the meat on. We ain't gonna be satisfied with just lickin' these tramps, we wanna tear 'em apart and throw 'em away! Alongside of us, a Belgian is madly in love with the Kaiser, and if we don't get a chance to use up this fightin' blood on them squareheads pretty soon, we 'll be manglin' each other, and that ain't no lie!

Well, our captain presented me with ten days' leave on account of me gettin' beaned in that raid, and naturally enough, as newly married guys will, I beat it back to Jeanne, which same I wed in my last letter to you. As they ain't no way on earth of lettin' any-

body know anything over here in advance, I was a complete surprise when I blowed into her home. She 's sittin' in what passes for the parlor in France, talkin' to her brother which is an "ace" in the French Aviation Corps. An ace in the Aviation Corps means the same as it does in stud poker, and this guy has got more medals than Sousa ever seen. He 's been poison to the German flyers, Joe, and any squarehead which will bring him down will be give a pocket full of iron crosses and allowed *not* to eat them German hot dogs for a week.

The two of them is sittin' there, and Jeanne is cryin'. My dare-devil brother-in-law is pattin' her on the shoulder.

"What 's the idea of them weeps?" I says, comin' into the room. "Has Napoleon escaped from his tomb or is the butcher holdin' out for cash?"

Well, I found out what a sensation was anyways, Joe. I was it!

Jeanne takes one flash at me and give a

yell that must of woke up half Camden, N. J. Then she leaps from the chair and drapes herself around my neck like a collar. "*Mon Dieu!*" she says, huggin' me tight, "I thought the boche have kill you!"

"They ain't enough of them!" I says, liftin' her up and kissin' her. "Why, I had this Hindenburg guy throwin' away his uneyform, and half the German army has threatened to resign unless the Alleys keep me outa the trenches!"

"*Que je suis heureux de vous!*" remarks Jeanne, splittin' the laughs, tears, and kisses three ways.

In butts friend brother-in-law. "Edouard!" he hollers. "It is then of the indeed you!" Before I can raise a hand, Joe, he has gone to work and kissed me his self!

"But they have wound you, *mon chéri!*" says Jeanne. "I hear you —"

"Ssh!" I says. "Just a little blood poisonin'. I got it chokin' the Kaiser —

my hand scraped against that trick whisker of his!"

"Ah! They have make you an officer!" chimes in the wife's relation, pointin' to the stripes on my sleeve. "You are then the captaine?"

"Captain?" I says. "I got that beat eighty ways — I 'm a *corporal!*"

"Ah!" they both says, rollin' their eyes and shakin' their heads like they 'll tell the world I 'm *there!*

"How many of the *boche* pig have you kill, then?" asks he.

"After the first few hundred I stopped countin'," I says. "They was a guy supposed to be with me with an addin' machine, but he overslept."

"Ah!" says Jeanne. "Sooch a brave *homme!*"

"Ain't I?" I admits. "Has anything happened here outside of the rain since I left?"

Her brother is still thinkin' about me.

"By the George!" he says, "France will give you the Croix de Guerre, with that palm!"

"I couldn't eat a thing!" I says, "but—"

"Tell all to me of the fight!" he interrupts. "I die of the excitement!"

"Listen!" I says, drawin' Jeanne a little closer. "The wire 's busy right now. If you wanna make yourself solid with me, you 'll go out and take a nice, long walk, so 's me and Jeanne can talk over the high cost of chocolate sundaes in Crimea, without bein' disturbed."

"*Parbleu!*" he remarks, givin' me a look at his gold tooth. "I well understand — I go!" He give a sigh that liked to blowed my hat off. "After all," he says, "who am I to stop the young from loving?"

"You 'd be a sucker if you tried it!" I says. "Love and let love, as whatsthis says."

Well, he blowed, Joe, and there was Jeanne and me all alone for the first time

since I got wed and hadda dash right away to the front. The last scene in any of them ten-reel movies, Joe, will give you a line on what took place.

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*Don't forget you gotta chance to enlist before they take you by hand in the draft.*)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I am back at the ringside again, my ten days' leave havin' come and gone like the Twentieth Century Limited. The worst part this time, of course, was leavin' Jeanne, and I must say I had a tough case of the blues for a while after I went away. But, Joe, this dame has got more stuff from the ears up than a foreman at Yale or one of them college joints, and she did n't make no wild scene or nothin' like that, which would n't of helped matters a bit. I fled outa here on one of them little trick trains, and she come down to the station with me as bright and full of pep as if she was in the front row of the Winter Garden, and a disinterested stranger would of thought I was on my way to get

elected King of Arizona or somethin', instead of goin' to the trenches. We tried to get done with all the good-byes at the house, but when the train come in it turned out they was a few we had overlooked, and all the French doughboys which was goin' back leaned out the windows and yelled encouragement to us like guys at a prize fight. Anything sentimental is a riot to the French, Joe, and we went big with this gang, believe me!

I am sendin' you a picture of Jeanne, and if she ain't the best-lookin' member of the fair sex you ever seen off a magazine cover, I'll devour your *chapeau*, as we say in France. Don't let none of them moving-picture guys see the photo, because I don't want her bothered with no cables whilst I 'm away. I wished I knowed how Windy Haskins is makin' out since them guys took him prisoner in the raid. It certainly is lonesome without him, because me and him was pals, and now they ain't nobody to fight

with but the Germans. All I know is that if them squareheads ever get mussy with Windy, they 'll wish he had never enlisted, and that 's a cinch!

I have got to cut this letter short, Joe, for reasons that is between me and the censor. But I have just heard we 're gonna move to some new trenches, so I gotta tear myself away from the ink. The guy that said the pen was mightier than the sword never seen no battle field durin' the rush hour, and that 's no camouflage; heh, Joe?

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(*The Avenger of Belgium.*)

III

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, I guess you must be thinkin' by this time that the boches have fin'ly got me, it is so long since I have wrote you. But such is not the case, Joe, and anybody that claims I 'm dead is a liar, and I can prove it!

Since last I took pen in hand and let it run wild over some clean white paper, I have had more adventures than the handsomest movie hero which ever bravely faced a battery of cameras, also I am now a sergeant and when you write to me you wanna say "Sir," and no familiarity goes! No doubt by the time you get this, if so, I will be a vice general, or somethin', and Pershing will be askin' me daily if I think everything is bein' run O. K. I will try and put

him at ease if he does, Joe, and not be stuck up as many a guy would be with less brains.

I am sorry to say I have not been wounded no more, only gettin' mauled up a bit and layin' in a hospital for three weeks, havin' suffered a bad attack of shell shock. But I ain't been layin' down on the job, Joe, because I been in a real sure-enough battle, which made that first German raid look like a warm session of pinochle; also I been took prisoner by the boches and then stole home on them — just like I done on Alexander that time in Philly.

Well, Joe, on a certain night we was ordered to relieve a battalion of French guys who 'd been holdin' a line of trenches a little to the left and a whole lot further toward the Germans than we 'd ever been yet. The officers seen that all the guys that come outa the first raid was among them present, because we was frothin' at the mouth to get back at them squareheads, and

also we 'd been under fire and was everything on earth but gun shy. The relief come off as nice and easy as the skin off of a banana, and they was n't as much as an angry look throwed at us by the Germans all night along. As is usual when they is a relief comin' off, we picked the darkest night in captivity and, as is usual under any circumstances over here, it was rainin' like Niagara Falls, so I don't think the boches even knowed the change had been made.

The next mornin' I stuck my dome up over the edge of the trench for an eyeful. Joe, don't tell me that a guy can't live if his heart don't beat, because mine skipped between eight and forty taps and I 'm still here, or was whilst writin' you this. There was them German trenches no more than prob'ly a hundred yards away, and you could see their barbed-wire entanglements, and the like, without no glass or nothin' at all. While I 'm lookin' over the scenery, thinkin' about everything under the sun —

or, in other words, Jeanne — they is a *plop!* beside me, and I got some dust in my eye. The next thing I knowed our top sergeant has grabbed me around the legs and throwed me.

"You big tinhead!" he hisses, when I get up. "Ain't you got no brains at all? I ought to of let them get you!"

"Was that a *bullet?*" I asks him.

"Oh, no!" he snarls. "That was n't no bullet—them squareheads is prob'ly throwin' confetti at us!"

He chased me into a dugout, Joe. I ain't no more than got inside when the loudest crash the world has ever heard comes off right over my head! In another minute shells was goin' off fast enough to make an addin' machine lay down and quit like a dog. I did n't have to be no Sherlock Holmes to figure out that them squareheads knowed we was there and we was due for a warm and busy day. We all was wise by this time that whenever a sudden and heavy

shell fire commences without no warnin', it 's a sign that the Germans is comin' over in our midst as soon as they figure the guns has done enough damage to the dugouts. Well, Joe, we all get set for them, wishin' to Heaven they would n't be detained nowheres on the way. They kept bangin' away at us, Joe, for three or four hours, and you or nobody else ever heard such a terrible and continual roarin' and boomin' in all your life! I thought all the dynamite in the world had come over and gone nutty.

This time our artillery was ready for them babies, and pretty soon *we* cut loose with everything we had. Oh, boy! Joe, you had to scream to make yourself heard, and then you could n't!

Well, me and about twenty other guys is down in a dugout with little or no air and nothin' but a piece of candle for light. We have been told to get set for an attack, and, believe me, Joe, that waitin' stuff is the toughest part of the whole show! A

guy's nerves becomes watch springs that keep windin' and unwindin' themselves, and you wanna yell your head off, just to get relief.

All of a sudden, Joe, we hear a gong bangin' somewheres, and they was a rush to get outa that dugout that would make a football game look like chess. We knowed what that gong meant, and we got our gas masks on in somethin' under half a second apiece. Then we pile out into what was form'ly our trench and bump into gangs of other doughboys doin' the same thing. If we had stayed below, Joe, we would of died like rats in a hole because the squareheads was gassin' us, so 's to make it as healthy as possible for *them* before they come over.

Well, Joe, as far as the trench was concerned, they was n't none! The high-explosive shells had took care of that, and they was nothin' left but holes big enough to hide Paterson, N. J., in. We stumbled and milled around, cussin' or prayin' ac-

cordin' to our religion, and every now and then somebody would give a yell and fall down one of them shell craters. A coupla guys would drag 'em out, full of mud and fight. Joe, we was the awfullest mob you ever seen in your life! Between them gas masks, which makes a guy look like a bat from below, and the mud, we sure was a tough-lookin' bunch to go up against.

All at once the shellin' stops, and through the smoke that 's driftin' away we can see the Germans pilin' outa their trenches and zigzaggin' this way and that toward us. We all give a yell of joy, and them officers of ours had their hands full keepin' us from goin' right out to meet them birds!

The first row of boches is carryin' little cans like fire extinguishers, and I 'm wonderin' what they are for, when, Joe, streams of yellow flame comes bustin' outa them and shoots over to us. You never seen nothin' like this, I don't care if you go to the movies night and day! That burnin'

stuff poured into us, Joe, and wherever it touched it cut to the bone. Well, it kinda surprised us for a minute, but we was there to show them German skunks that, no matter what they pulled on us, we 'd raise 'em the limit, bein' Yanks, and, Joe, we went to it! A coupla machine guns opens up beside me, and the first line of squareheads just melted away like fried ice, with their cans of hell and all! These birds was what the Germans call the "shock" troops, which is the same as the Suicide Club, and the rest of them keeps comin' right on.

We got some kinda order in what 's left of our trenches by this time, and we start lettin' 'em have it with hand grenades. We burnt them things over just as fast as we could throw 'em, and, Joe, they kept goin' down right and left like tenpins durin' a tourney. Then, without no warnin', our artillery opens up on 'em with a barrage fire, and we get the word to go over and get

'em, and to hell with their liquid fire and gas.

Oh, boy!!!

This is what we 'd been waitin' for ever since we come to France, and, Joe, the yell we turned loose drowned out the artillery! We had made a bum outa their flame throwers with our machine guns, and before they could get set again we was on top of 'em and hittin' them boches with everything but Paris. I don't know what nobody else did, for I was the busiest guy in France for the next half hour. I can only tell you what *I* done, which was aplenty!

The first stop I make is in front of a big squarehead which developed a case of stage fright and missed me with his gun. Then he come at me with a knife as big as Brooklyn, and I let him have the baynet through the ribs, yellin' like a maniac whilst doin' so. I seen a doughboy go down near me, and two of them German tramps is so

anxious to baynet him that they collide with each other, head on. I got 'em both and I suppose that guy will never think of thankin' me for it! Joe, between the steady roar of our artillery, the crackle of the machine guns, and the yells of us doughboys — joy and pain mixed together — why, hell in full blast would be a whisper in a boiler factory alongside of it, that 's all!

I fell down one of them shell holes, and a boche seen me go and jumps in after me, firin' an automatic as fast as he could pull the trigger. He turned out to be the rottenest shot in the world, but a darned good wrestler, and we rolled around and gouged each other all over the bottom of that hole. Fin'ly I got out my trench knife, and for all he knowed the war was over. I had some trouble climbin' out of this mud, and when I did I seen I was through for the day, anyways. Joe, they was three boches on top of me before I can lift a hand, but instead of hidin' a baynet in me, one of them whangs

me over the dome with the stock of his rifle, and I resigned!

When I come to life I 'm layin' on the floor of a dugout that don't look like home to me. The biggest German in the world is standin' guard over me, and I ain't no more than opened an eye when he prods me with his baynet and motions for me to get up. I took his advice, and after feelin' myself over I find that outside of a lump on my head as big as a basketball, I am O. K. except a little stiff. "How many of your trenches did we take?" I says.

"Shut up!" he growls in plain English. "You will be shot to-morrow!"

What d' ye think of that bird, Joe, tryin' to gloom it all up for me! Well, he tells me to walk ahead of him, and I do the same, goin' all the way down the trench. The squareheads all look me over like I 'm some new kind of fish, and quite a few yells stuff at me in German which was no doubt knocks, if I only knowed what they was

sayin'. It was all I could do, Joe, to keep from bustin' the lot of them in the nose!

We wind up before another dugout, and my charmin' guide turns me over to a squarehead at the door. This guy pushes me inside, and there I am up before the Night Court, or somethin', of the German army. They is three guys sittin' behind a table which from their uneyforms must of been at least the Kaiser and a couple of the crown princes. They are hard-lookin' babies, Joe, and they glare at me like they're tryin' to assassinate me with a glance. I come right back at 'em and tried it myself. Neither of us had no luck. The bird that brung me in does everything in the way of a salute but get down and kiss the dirt, and then he opens up with a string of boche lingo. At a given point he stops, pulls that trick salute again, beats it — and I 'm alone with these three guys.

"What is the name of your regiment?" barks one of them in English.

Joe, I hadda laugh to myself. As if I 'd tell them bums anything! "The Lenox Avenue Assassins!" I says.

One of 'em writes it down.

"How long have you occupied your present salient?" is next.

"Sixty-four years," I says with a pleasant grin.

"Another incorrect answer and you die — pig!" bawls this guy, pullin' a gun. "Remember — I 'll shoot!"

I figure he 's four-flushin', Joe. If he was gonna shoot, he 'd let the gun talk instead of warnin' me. I yanked a coin outa my pocket and throwed it on the table in front of him. "All right, stupid!" I says, "I 'll shoot a quarter! Who 's got the dice?"

It goes over their heads like a airplane, Joe, and the third guy takes me in hand.

"How many of the American swine are there now in France?" he asks me.

"What is the name of your regiment?" barks one of them in English.
"The Lenox Avenue Assassins!" I says.

"More than you Dutch rats can handle!" I says.

The guy with the gun shoots over my head. Can you imagine them guys tryin' to scare *me,* Joe!

"The next time you die!" he hollers, as red as catsup. "How many American troops are there now in France?"

"I 'm the only one!" I says, grinnin' at him. "They sent me out here to look over the situation all by myself. I give you tramps a good fight, did n't I?"

Joe, they frothed at the mouth in German for a minute, and fin'ly I am led out, or rather shoved and mauled out, by the guy that brung me in.

"You die to-morrow, swine!" snarls one of the judges, shakin' his fist at me.

"Aw, go to hell! you big stiff!" I bawls — louder than him!

The guard knocks me kickin' with the butt of the gun.

Well, I 'm dragged to my feet again, Joe, and shoved back along the trench till we get to some steps, and up I go with the squarehead in back of me proddin' me along with the baynet. I am pretty well bunged up, but, as usual, hopin' for the best. I see this guy is takin' me back of the lines, prob'ly to their guardhouse, and I got the old thinker workin' overtime tryin' to dope out a way to escape.

Heaven can't be so far away at that, Joe, because the Lord must of seen the jam I was in and decided to take a hand in the thing himself. From outa nowhere merry Hades busts loose again, and lookin' back I seen the boches millin' around in the trenches like a lot of scared sheep! Bang! goes a shell right in the middle of the place we had just left, and fare-thee-well, trench! Then our artillery opens up in earnest and, yellin' like fiends from below, our doughboys and the French comes swarmin' over for the counterattack.

Joe, I felt so good I let out a yell, and the squarehead which had me in charge swings around. He 'd been lookin' over and seen our gang comin' the same as me, only his feelin's was a trifle different from mine! The minute he faced me, I put all I had left on a round-arm swing to the jaw, and he went down so hard he give one bounce. In a second I got his gun, knife, and automatic, and in another second he comes to. I yanked him to his feet, and that bird did everything but sob out loud for mercy, even goin' so far as to bring his wife and six children in Germany into it. Joe, I had no time to chat with this guy; I had just worked out a scheme in my head, and it hadda be done quick. I figured that if I could get this squarehead back to our lines, maybe he would cough up some information the same as his masters figured *I* would.

I told him where he was headed for, and he liked to kiss me! They ain't no doubt

about it, Joe, from what he told me, them boches is fed up on the war! Not only he did n't try to get away, but he crawls along with me from hole to hole and hill to hill, even showin' me a short cut he 'd been over before.

Joe, it was a tough job gettin' back, because shells was fallin' around us like hail, and at one place we hadda cut right around a German trench. But suddenly we come up out of a hole and run right into a squad of doughboys. I never was so glad to see nobody in years! One of these babies all but run a baynet through me before he seen who I was, but I worked my way with the tame boche right into our communication trench, and kept on goin' till I had dragged him in before our captain.

" Here is a squarehead I have brung you, sir!" I says, salutin'. " Maybe he can be made to spill some dope about the rest of his gang."

I seen him jump to his feet, Joe, and that 's all I know, except what was told

me second-hand. They claim I fainted dead away, but you know that 's a lie, Joe; I never done nothin' like that in my life! Anyways, I come to on a stretcher, and what they done with my pet squarehead I don't know. I *do* know that the captain come to see me in the base hospital and shook my hand like he was gettin' as much pleasure outa it as I was. Before he left he called me "Sergeant," and if I was gonna faint at all I would of done it then!

Joe, I am goin' back to the front-line trenches to-morrow and take on them guys again. I ain't got no more time to write now — I gotta *fight!* Anyways, I ain't gonna write to you no more, because if you ain't on your way over here, you ain't worth writin' to!

Come on now, Joe — batter up!

Yours truly,

SERGEANT EDWARD HARMON.

(I guess that's poor — that "Sergeant" thing, eh?)

SIXTH INNING

SIXTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, no doubt you will be dumfounded to get another letter from me, after I had gone to work and claimed in my last that I would n't write to you no more, not even if you was runnin' a puzzle contest. But I have just got your letter with the news that you have enlisted, so as long as you ain't too proud to fight, why, I ain't too proud to write!

I will also do what I can, Joe, to keep the war goin' until you get here. It certainly would be tough if you come all the way over, only to find this brawl had been called off on account of wet grounds or somethin'. If I was you, I would n't take

no chances on it, but get them to send me over at once, or even before if possible.

I sure was glad to hear you had fin'ly decided to carry a gun for the Land of the Free, instead of simply standin' up in the theatre when they play the "Star-Spangled Banner" and lettin' it go at that. You can't win this here war by wavin' a flag and hopin' the Kaiser gets caught in the rain without an umbrella, or somethin' like that, Joe. Singin' all them popular patriotic songs ain't gettin' us guys nothin' over here. That stuff is all right for vaudeville, but it don't take no trenches! It's a case of "Come on in, the war is fine!" — them three cheers and the like will keep till we come back — hey, Joe?

I knowed all along that you had the stuff in you, Joe, and sooner or later you was gonna get in it — especially when the draft come along.

They was a bunch of new guys got here the other day, and I been busy lookin' them

over to see if you was amongst them. I ain't seen you yet, Joe, and they ain't no way for me to know if you 're gettin' my letters or not. So if this fails to reach you, kindly let me know in the next mail that you did n't get it and where you are located. It makes it easier to write to anybody if you have some idea where they are at.

They was a lot of colored guys come over with this last gang, and while we ain't had no chance to see them work, they sure look like scrappers. They are more good-natured than a young kitten which has had a shot of catnip and they go around grinnin' like hyenas all the time. I was on guard duty the other night, Joe, and one of them guys come along. I halted him.

" Friend or enemy? " I says.

" This ain't no time to argy, white man! " comes the answer out of the dark. " I 'm out yere in dis No Man's Land and them Germans ain't got no love fo' *me!* One of them there sharp *shooters* has been wastin'

the last ten minutes, tryin' to hit me where it 'll show!"

Joe, I had a hard time to keep from bustin' out laffin'. I throwed a flashlight on him, and this baby was scared stiff. His eyes is poppin' out till you could of hung a cane on either of 'em.

"Who are you?" I asks.

"Boss, I 'm jes' nothin' but Sam Hendricks — Happy Sam, the Laughin' Man, they calls me," he says, whilst his teeth is knockin' together like them castanet things, "but Ah ain't done a piece of laffin' fo' the last half hour, and that ain't no lie! That there German sharp *shooter* is suah handy with a gun!"

"Where do you belong?" I says.

"I belongs around a Hundred and Thirtieth Street and Amsterdam Avenue," he tells me — like he was standin' on Broadway instead of France — "and Ah 'd be insane with pleasure if Ah was there right now! C'mon boss, lemme pass — if that

there German sharp *shooter* had missed me any closer jes' now, y' all would n't have nobody to talk to out yere!"

"Well, let 's hear the password," I says.

"Man, Ah done fo'got it!" he tells me. "Seems lak Ah kain't git mah mind to workin' on nothin' out yere jes' now but that German sharp *shooter* —"

"You can't get in here without the password!" I says.

"Looks like Ah 'm havin' plenty of luck to-night," he says, "and all of it 's bad! Kain't you gimme an idea of how that password goes, boss? You know, don't tell me outright, but jes' get me started, see? Y' all can say: 'Well, brother, it begins with a Z, or somethin' like that, heh?'"

"Nothin' stirrin'!" I tells him. "For all I know you might be a German spy. We can't take no chances!"

"Boss, I ain't lyin'," he says. "Ah 'm simply boilin' ovah with the truth jes' now!

I ain't no more German spy than you is, if not less. I ain't no German nothin'. Ah 'm jes' a pore little ole Tennessee nigger with one foot in the grave and the othah on a banana peel! If y' all don't lemme past, they ain't nothin' fo' me to do but start walkin' to Germany all by mahself, and as long as we-all come ovah this far togethah, it don't look jes' fair fo' me to be the first one into Berlin!"

"Well, you can't stall around here!" I says. "Go on back wherever you come from. I got orders to let nobody pass, and that 's all they is to it!"

He gives a groan, Joe, and hitches up his pants.

"Boss," he says, "jes' do me one favor. When General Pershing finds me missin' in the mahnin' and starts rarin' around and tearin' up the whole camp to find me, you tell him how come I ain't yere. Throw me a couple of them *long* baynets and a gun. Ah 'm goin' ovah to them German

trenches and make 'em wish this yere nigger had let the war go on by itself!"

"Wait a minute!" I says, fightin' off the hystericals. "How did you come to get out there in No Man's Land?"

"Boss," he says, "Ah 'll tell you the truth. All mah life Ah been workin' on jobs where fresh air was as scarce as honesty in a crap game! Down home in Tennessee Ah worked in a quarry which was so deep that the only way you could see the sky was with a pair of opry glasses. Ah comes to New Yawk, and the only job Ah can git me is sand hog in the new subway. Yere Ah am workin' mahself to death, between two and three miles under the ground. Ah goes in the army, and Ah gotta stay in the basement of the ship all the way ovah yere. When Ah gits yere, they put me in a trench. Seems lak they don't wanna let this pore nigger come up fo' air no time, and when Ah dies and gits buried it 'll suah seem natural to me! Ah come out yere to-night

lookin' fo' the cap'n. Ah wanna get me a transfer to the aviation. Ah 'm gonna git some fresh air one time, anyways!"

Oh, boy!

I let him in after that!

Well, Joe, we gotta lot of new songs over here now, besides "Where Do We Go From Here?" which same is our favorite and a lot more of the old stand-bys, which runs more to the sob stuff. This one is all the rage here now with the English, and we often sing it together. It was wrote by a English guy which used to be a actor and is now tryin' to live that down by fightin' for his country. I 'll tell you the words so 's you can learn it before you come over and also because the words is as good as the music, which happens very seldom in songs — hey, Joe? The tune is "A Little Bit of Heaven." (Remember how John McCormack used to make that baby lay down and roll over?) This one is called "A Little Bit of Hell." It goes like this:

Have you heard the tale about the land that lies beyond the Rhine,
And who it was discovered that home of Huns and swine?
One day Old Satan felt distressed, the sparks flew from his eyes,
And he said: "I'll find another home somewhere beneath the skies."

CHORUS

So old Satan found a spot on earth, all steeped in blood and crime,
And he hollers out with all his might, "This bit of earth is mine!"
'T is the land of Huns and Kultur, is this little bit of hell
Where they butcher babes and mothers, as they murdered Nurse Cavell.
They sent their imps in submarines to murder on the sea,
And the rotten Kaiser never thought what would the harvest be;

So the Devil sent for all his mob and shouted out with glee:
"I am going to move my Demons here," and he called it Germany!

Some ballad, hey, Joe? The English sing it more than we do, but we got a new line for the end of the chorus:

When we get through with Kaiser Bill, they'll be no Germany!

Well, Joe, I suppose the baseball season will be openin' over there soon now, and I am sure a long ways from the Polo Grounds. I don't have to tell you how much I 'd like to be standin' there in the old box once again, burnin' strikes over the plate for Cobb and them guys to laff at and no doubt Connolly would be callin' 'em balls, as usual. However, I ain't got no kick comin'. I been wounded a coupla times, and a guy can't have everything — hey, Joe?

I have got a fourteen-day leave of absence comin' to me and naturally enough I 'm gonna spend it with Jeanne, my practically newly made bride. Joe, every time I look at this here human angel from above, I wish Rockefeller and them well-to-do millionaires was around so 's I could snap my finger at 'em and say: "Hah! You guys ain't got *nothin'* — look what *I* drawed!"

Yours truly,

Sergt. Ed Harmon.

(*The Kaiser's nemesis.*)

P. S. — That nemesis thing is class, hey? They ain't nobody in my outfit, includin' me, knows what it means. I got it off a movie titel.

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Whoops, my dear — I been to Paris! Joe, I have had more adventures since I wrote you last than Sindbad the Sailor. You no doubt remember that guy, Joe; he was champion liar of the Arabian Nights. But all comical jokes to one side, I been to gay Paree, as we used to say at the workhouse, and it ain't no wonder to me the Kaiser is so anxious to get there, because, Joe, I 'll tell the world fair this Paris place is *some* village!

If you got my last letter, no doubt you 'll remember I give out the information that I was due for a fourteen days' leave of absence, and it was my idea to spend at least two weeks of it with Jeanne, my blushin' bride. Well, Joe, on the day I was sup-

posed to leave the American army flat on its back for one-half of a month, I get word to report to the captain. I naturally figured I was gonna get promoted to assistant general or somethin' of the sort, and I walked up to the captain's tent whistlin' melodiously. My dope was slightly out of true, because the first thing the captain said, after we have got the salutes all took care of, was the following:

"Harmon, I 've selected you out of the whole company for an important mission. You are to take a message from General Pershing to Major General —— at the —— Hotel in Paris. Do you know Paris?"

"Well, I heard tell of it, anyways," I says.

"Are you pretty well up in your French?" is the next question.

"Sure!" I says, "I 'm up in the air on it!"

"Hmph!" he says. "Let 's see. *Parlez-vous français?*"

"That 's a cinch!" I comes back. "*Oui, oui, monsere* — also, *merci beaucoo, sil vous play, tres bien, allons, viola,* and likewise *aux arms!*"

He grins at me.

"Where did you pick up that collection?" he says.

"I got one of them 'French While You Wait' books," I tells him.

"Do you know what those expressions mean?" he wants to know.

"Well," I says, "I ain't got *that* far yet. I figure if I can only remember to wave my hands whilst I 'm talkin', I 'll get away with it!"

He laughs and gimme the message from General Pershing in an envelope.

"Report back here in two weeks," he says, "and — don't spend all your money in Paris."

"They ain't a chance of that, sir," I says, "because I 'm savin' all my dough for the *big* blowout in Berlin!"

The first thing I done then was to go over and break the bad news to Jeanne. She has dolled herself all up on account of expectin' me and, Joe, she looked as good as $400 a week would look to a chorus girl. She gimme the smile which is one of the reasons we are a young married couple and folleys that up by placin' both of them soft little white satin arms around my neck.

"But you have disappoint' me, *mon chéri*," she says, poutin'. "For two hours I have wait all alone by myself for you."

"You ain't got nothin' on me, kid," I says, givin' her a lovin' kiss, and why not? "I waited twenty-seven years for *you!*"

Joe, conversation was at a premium, as the guy says, for the next three minutes.

Grabbin' hold of the first breathin' spell, I told her I had been ordered to Paris. Joe, she gets pale.

"But why do you have to go to the Paree?" she asks.

"Search me!" I says. "I must of been born lucky, hey?"

Well, Joe, we have our first set-to since we been man and wife. Jeanne claims that I 'm tickled silly at the chance to see Paris, instead of spendin' my furlough with her. She also remarks that once I get inside of gay Paree I will go to work and forget I ever knowed her, and the dashin' young city dames will steal me away. She 's talkin' so fast that an addin' machine would of quit like a dog if it had been tryin' to folley her, and all they is left for me to do is wait till she wears herself out. When she has got all through tellin' me what a crool-hearted retch I am, she turns on the weeps for a rousin' finish.

Joe, they ain't no man livin' could deny Jeanne *anything* when she merely requests it, but when she *weeps* for it, Joe — well, this here baby would make Von Hindenburg throw away his uneyform!

"Listen," I says. "You have got me

figured all wrong. Paris don't mean nothin' in my young life, and I 'm only goin' there because I been ordered to do the same. As far as havin' a gay time is concerned, I 'll lay the *mayor* of Paris eight to five I can show him more excitement on Broadway on even a rainy Sunday than he seen since he 's been in France! But to show you I 'm honest and true, I 'm gonna take you to this Paris place with me — what d' ye think of that? "

Joe, she looks at me for a second like can I have heard it right? and then she jumps up, claps her hands together and smothers me with kisses. Once again I am the white-haired boy with my family, and we got peace and quiet.

" *Merci, tu es bien aimable, quand partons nous?* " she says.

" I doubt it," I says. " It looks more like rain to me."

" You do not the understand, *mon chéri,*" she tells me. " I say you are of the very

kind to me, to take me to the Paree, and I ask of you only when we start — *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Listen," I says. "I have gone to work and learned you a dozen words of English, and it looks to me like you could get them in now and then when talkin' to me and lay off that French! Half the time I don't know whether you 're makin' love to me or bawlin' me out!"

"*Eh bien, mon chéri!*" she says, showin' me all her pretty front teeth. "It shall be as you wish. I shall to you speak none but the américaine. After all, it is of the simple, *oui vraiment,* I shall to you show, see — Allo Kit, of the gee whizz but yes, you are the baby's doll, I for you!"

"Hey!" I hollers, droppin' my hat in the excitement. "Where did you learn *that* stuff?"

She throws the smile into high and looks down at the floor.

"But the brave, gallant *américaine* soldiers all have say that to me before we

marry." She puts her arm around me and points to our wedding ring. "Now, *mon chéri,*" she says, "I show them this and say: 'You have come not too soon!' *N'est-ce pas?*"

I let it go at that, and I might as well of, Joe, because they ain't no man can lick the whole American army, hey? And then again, who am I to blame them guys for tryin'? You ain't never seen Jeanne, Joe, or you 'd get me!

Well, we grab a train outa this burg that same afternoon, and it 's about two hours' ride to Paris if the engineer is lucky. The trains over here, Joe, looks like a lot of taxicabs towin' each other, and instead of everybody sittin' together in one car, they are all divided off into separate compartments. Four people can sit in each one, if they 've knowed each other for years. The tickets is sold first, second, and third class and, Joe, they could call 'em all steerage and let it go at that, because they ain't *no*

class to any of 'em. We have been on our way about an hour, and still on the track, Joe, and Jeanne is studyin' the English language by tryin' to read an old B. & O. time-table I give her, when I decided to walk through the train and look over our fellow adventurers. I ain't no more than got into the next car, which is marked "*Billets de Première*," when I seen an American doughboy havin' it out with what I figured was prob'ly a admiral in the French navy, from his uneyform. He turned out to be nothin' less than the conductor. The doughboy come from somewheres south of Washington, D. C., from his accent, and is bigger than the Polo Grounds, whilst the conductor could of hid hisself behind a fleck of dust. The conductor don't speak no English, and the doughboy don't *parlez-vous* the French, but that ain't stoppin' either of them from talkin'. It sounded like a dress rehearsal of a race riot when I butted in.

"What seems to be the trouble here?" I asks the doughboy.

He swung around and gimme the once over.

"Say, sergeant!" he hollers, "Ah could jes' naturally fall on yuah neck and kiss you! Ah thought Ah nevah *was* gonna heah nobody talk United States no moah. This yere little grampus is fixin' to put me off his train and —"

The little French guy winds up and cuts loose with everything he had in the line of conversation. By listenin' to every tenth word, I found out that the doughboy had a third-class ticket and was in a first-class compartment. Outside of that he had n't wronged a soul. I pulled out a five-franc piece and slipped it to the conductor.

"Here!" I says. "Take this and can that chatter. This guy is fightin' for his country so 's to make the world safe for the Democrats, and all you 're doin' is takin' tickets. If —"

Joe, the minute I mentioned the word "fight," this here little French guy brightens all up. He shoves out his chest about a mile and throws open his coat. Oh, boy! He 's got a whole handful of them Croix de Guerre medals on his chest and, believe me, Joe, a guy has got to be a fightin' fool to get them babies over here now! I never felt so much like a boob in all my life, not even when I presented Crawford with a home run, that rare off day I had in Detroit. This doughboy gets wise in a minute, and he looks like he wished to Heaven he could drop through the floor. Here 's this little French guy been doin' his bit and got wounded, no doubt savin' France, and all *I* done was to get hit a couple of times in one of the brawls we had with the Germans. Can you imagine how I felt, Joe, after bawlin' him out?

Well, Joe, I begged his pardon till he got sick of hearin' it, and the doughboy says he 's ready to hop off and walk into

Paris if the French guy says so. But this bird was an ace. He told us he got his at Verdun, gas and machine-gun stuff, and he hopes to get in it again in a month if he 's lucky. As long as we 're American soldiers, we can ride first-class and welcome, and in a minute he comes back with a coupla bottles of *vin ordinaire.* Joe, you can't beat these French guys for either fightin' or hospitality, hey? We drunk the health of France, America, England, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Italy, Yonkers and Lenox Avenue, and we would of drunk some more, only they is a limit even to *vin ordinaire.*

I took the doughboy in and introduced him to Jeanne. He come from Nashville, Tenn., and is a great big kid with skin like a baby. His old man has got $8.75 for every Irishman in Dublin. One flash at my blushin' bride made him dizzy, and when I told him she had three sisters which was pro-matrimony, he insists on joinin'

our party into Paris. I took pity on him, bein' all alone in a strange land, and declared him in. Joe, he was a good guy and had a express money order for five thousand bucks, so I figured he could use a coupla guardeens, hey?

We arrived in Paris at a place called the Gare Saint-Lazare, which is a burlesque on Grand Central Station. This here doughboy won't have it no other way but that we go to the best hotel as his guest, so we grabbed a taxi for the Grand Hotel, which a pal of mine had tipped me off to. I asked the clerk how much they was tryin' to get at the time for three rooms and a bath, and he says fifty francs a day. After thankin' him for the compliment of thinkin' I had it, I says we will give him sixteen, and he says all right.

Our rooms was on the fifth floor, and the doughboy's, whose name was Calhoun, was right across from us. They is every convenience with the exception of fresh air,

light, hot water, soap, clean linen, and service. Once you get in a room they ain't no way of gettin' in touch with the clerk downstairs except by cable, and then he don't know what you 're talkin' about and don't care. They is a lot of push-button bells in the room, and if you ring any given one of them, Joe, in comes a *femme de chambre,* which is French slang for chambermaid. She grins like a wolf and asks are you an officer, and no matter what you ask her to bring, she says: "*Oui, oui!*" and "*Merci!*" like she understood English as well as the next one. She never comes back with nothin'.

You can only get hot water on two days a week, Saturday and Sunday. Even on them red-letter days, they is little danger of scaldin' yourself in the bath, because the water is about as hot as that pole Cook claims he found!

Well, the next mornin' I let Jeanne sleep, and me and this Calhoun guy goes out to

get his money order cashed and give Paris the up and down. We passed a lot of places called the "Knickerbocker Bar" and "New York Café" and things like that, which made me homesick up until the time I looked into them.

Calhoun changes his money order for about 28,000 francs and we are off to stand Paris on its ear.

I know you are crazy to hear what I thought about Paris, it bein' the first time I ever seen it. Well, Joe, all I can say is that Paris reminds me of Philadelphia with a bun on! The streets is all called "rues" and the main one is the Rue de la Paix. It 's a whole lot like Broadway would be, without the electric lights, theatres, hotels, and cabarets. Every other place is a restaurant, and the ones in between is cafés. The people here is so stuck on their home town that they won't even go indoors to eat, but sit right out on the pavement at little tables for all their meals, so 's they can keep right

on lookin' at that dear Paris all the time, not to say the dames which parades up and down.

The girls is pretty near all knockouts, and none of them is too stuck up to give a guy a pleasant smile and pass the time of day. I must say that anybody which gets lonesome here ain't got no one but hisself to blame, Joe! The men is all in uneyform and great little guys. I think us doughboys is mixin' with the French better than anybody else. They go out of their way to make things nice for us and don't laff at us when we try to speak French and call eggs "woofs" instead of whatever it is.

Joe, a Frenchman is the politest guy on earth. If you go into a place of business here and ask a guy how to get to some certain street and number, he closes down his desk, calls a taxi, stops on the way to buy you a shot of *vin ordinaire*, and delivers you personally right outside the door, the while beggin' your pardon for not gettin' you

there sooner! Can you imagine anything like that in New York? You go up to a guy on Broadway and ask him how to get somewheres, and what does he do? He says: "I never heard tell of it; I 'm a stranger here myself!" Am I right, Joe?

When I first come to New York, I thought the place must of been deserted the day before, because everybody I asked for information was strangers there themselves, accordin' to their own confession.

I heard a lot of talk about Paris bein' up against it on account of the war, the people all downhearted, and food bein' as scarce as heat prostrations in Iceland. Joe, that is all the bunk! They is plenty of food here for everybody, and I put away some of the finest steaks I ever seen. If the people is downhearted, then I 'm vice president of Egypt! Joe, they are the gamest nation on earth, and we are proud to be in the line-up over here with 'em. They 've had a tough

time for four years, and they know they been to the war all right, but that ain't gloomed 'em a little bit. They 're as full of pep as a steam drill, and pretty near everything that was runnin' before the war here is still doin' business at the old stand. Why, Joe, one of these French guys could *kid* the Kaiser to death, on the level!

Well, I deliver the letter from General Pershing, and then me and Calhoun walks around. We seen the Champs Elysées and the Invalides, where Napoleon is buried. There 's a thing which goes to show how game and stubborn the French is. Here this guy Napoleon has been planted since St. Looey win a pennant, and the French won't even admit he 's dead yet — they call this joint the Invalides, which is only concedin' that he 's *sick!* Can you tie that?

The dames all look us over, and this doughboy gives 'em a pleasant grin and keeps tellin' me what a riot of a burg Paris

is. He claims the outlook is that they won't be a dull moment for him till he goes back to the front. I had my hands full with this bird, keepin' him from runnin' wild till we get back to the hotel.

The taxicabs over here is the same as New York, except that the chauffeurs is all bum guessers. They ain't even got the slightest idea of where you told 'em to go, and they take you somewheres else at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, swearin' somethin' terrible every time they miss runnin' over somebody. We started back to the hotel in one, and this guy took us there by way of Russia, I think, because I never seen so much of the country before in my life! We finally got outside the hotel and managed to make this bird stop. He acted like he was sore because we had cut the voyage short, and I made the mistake of askin' him what we owed.

"*Vingt quatre francs!*" he sneers.

Joe, this was past me! I thought I

knowed all about countin' in French, but this was new stuff. I found out later that the French has got a trick way of countin', all their own. Instead of sayin' "eighty-four," for instance, they say "four times twenty and four."

Well, Joe, we get out of the cab and start to give this bird an argument, and it begins to rain. We get back in the cab to continue the debate without gettin' wet, and this French Jesse James *shoves the clock on again* and keeps right on comin' back at us *while the meter keeps registerin'!* Here he is prob'ly callin' us pigs and like that, and at the same time gettin' paid for it! Every time we agreed on the original charge, Joe, the clock would show somethin' different, and we 'd start scrappin' all over again. This might be goin' on yet if a porter from the hotel had n't come to the rescue. He sized the thing up in a second.

"Pay but fifteen francs, monsieur!" he

says. I give him twenty, and we beat it. The last I heard him and the chauffeur was runnin' down each other's grandfathers, uncles, parents, friends, and brothers. They was quite a crowd enjoyin' it.

Jeanne was dollin' up when we got upstairs, so we went into Calhoun's room to wait. He claimed walkin' around had made him thirsty and that buyin' *vin ordinaire* was helpin' France the same as fightin' was, so he presses a button. In about half a hour we hear a key in the door, and in comes a tall, thin guy, all dressed up like a fish. In a Paris hotel none of the help ever knocks — that is, they don't knock nothin' but the Germans — they let themselves right in your room with a pass-key. This bird has got on a dress suit, and he 's featurin' a mustache which is sharper on each end than a baynet. He looks like the ambassador from Coney Island, or somethin' of the sort.

"I guess you-all have got in the wrong room," says Calhoun.

"Ah, monsieur," says the newcomer, "I speak well the English. There is not of the mistake. I am the commissionaire!"

"We 're in right already!" whispers Calhoun to me. He turns to the stranger. "Commissioner of what?" he says — "fire, police, or water?"

"Ah!" is the answer, with a piece of shoulder waggin', "just the commissionaire."

"Will you have a little swallow?" asks Calhoun, reachin' for a glass.

"It is the too early for the bird — she is not too good!" says Stupid.

I 'd been figurin' him out. I got him!

"This guy 's a waiter!" I says to Calhoun.

"You 're suah crazy!" he tells me. "They ain't no waitah goes around in a dress suit in the mawnin'. He 's gonna get hisself married or somethin'. I 'll betcha, heh?"

"What would monsieur desire?" asks Mysterious Mike.

"How's the champagne runnin' to-day?" asks Calhoun.

"Nothin' doin'!" I says. "You're an American doughboy, and you're on the water wagon!"

He gimme a frown.

"That goes!" I says.

"All right!" says Calhoun. "Bring us some seltzer lemonades."

"That I do not the understand," says the commissionaire. "What is she that seidlitz lemonade?"

"Well," says Calhoun to me, "I done what I could — I asked for it, and if they ain't got it, can I help it?" He turns to the commissionaire. "You claim you speak English, hey? All right! Bring us two Bronx cocktails, *Parlez-vous?*"

The commissionaire looks more stupid than usual for a second, but he's game!

"Of the certainly!" he says, without

battin' an eye. "I will return in a trice!"

Joe, we wait an hour. Jeanne is ready, lookin' like a million dollars and champin' on the bit to gaze on Paris, but Calhoun is firm.

"Ain't this great?" he says, smackin' his lips. "Imagine gettin' Bronx cocktails in Paris. Them guys is there, eh?"

We wait another half hour, and in comes friend commissionaire. He backs into the room with a tray. Calhoun smacks his lips some more. "Your wife will like this Bronnix," he says. The commissionaire turns around, grinnin' from here to Japan. Joe, he had n't nothin' on me in the grin line when I seen what he brought. On the tray is the following — one set of chicken feathers; that 's all!

"I have the time of the most difficult to get the cocktails," he says. "The hen she is of the easy, and I catch him, scald and pluck the feather. The cock he joomp the fence, and I have much run to catch her.

But, *viola!* I am the success. I take off the magnificent feather of the tail. Here are they. I know not at all what monsieur requires of them. For madame of a certainty, perhaps for the *chapeau* — who knows? I have them. The price is nothing — forty francs!"

Oh, boy!

I got the hystericals, and Calhoun throwed all the pillers in the place at him.

Can you imagine *us* tryin' to kid *them* guys?

Yours truly,

Sergt. EDWARD HARMON.

(*Hey, where's them cigarettes?*)

SEVENTH INNING

SEVENTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, don't be surprised if you read in the papers any day now that the Germans has fled outa France, because I am back at the front again. No doubt you remember in my last letter I was on leave of absence when them squareheads pulled off that spring drive, and I 'll betcha Pershing, Haig, and Foch won't let me get six inches away from the trenches again till the war 's over. Sec. Baker was over here too, and I seen him talkin' to Gen. Pershing the day I come back. They both gimme a odd look as I passed, and a infant could figure out what they was thinkin'. You never won no lovin' cups with your brains, Joe, so I 'll tell you what was goin'

on in their minds. They was thinkin' which one of them the American public would blame for lettin' me be away when the boches pulled off that drive. Joe, I would of run them guys ragged and will do the same the minute they turn me loose on 'em again!

But all jokes to one side, Joe, it was certainly tough that I had to be elsewhere when this thing come off, hey? However, they is a good chance that I will soon be 'mid shot and shell again, because they is a rumor runnin' around wild here that we are goin' right up to where this latest free-for-all is bein' had, at any minute. Joe, when we do go up, believe me, we will knock them squareheads kickin' and make 'em like it!

Don't pay no attention, Joe, to that there slight gain which them Germans tore off the other day. Every one of them guys must of been carryin' a pocketful of horse-shoes and wore nothin' around their necks but four-leaf clovers. My dope is that they

was all fed rabbit's left-hind legs for breakfast and Hindenburg must of touched all the humpbacks in the world on the back. If this big stiff in Berlin with the trick whisker thinks any of us Alleys is bothered about this drive, he 's kiddin' himself to death. We let them squareheads come outa their holes where we could get at 'em and staked 'em to a coupla useless burgs over here simply to make it look good. No doubt you remember, Joe, how I used to let Cobb and the like get a long lead off first and just when they got the idea I was dreamin' of the sweet old farm or somethin', I 'd wheel around like lightnin' and nail 'em a mile off the bag. Well, that 's what us Alleys is gonna pull over here. Just when them squareheads figure they have got us in a hole, which is what we want 'em to think, we 'll turn on them babies and — oh, boy! They won't none of them will ever see France again, except maybe on a picture post card or somethin'.

Well, Joe, no doubt you remember in my last letter I was in dear old Paris, with a chance to see is it true they is more life *there* than they is in South Bend or Poughkeepsie. Joe, I must say I had a elegant time and would prob'ly be satisfied to live there all my life — if I was French. The town is a knockout and the people is great! Jeanne, my newly made bride and a guy from the South named Calhoun, was with me, and we seen all the sights just like the hicks does when they hit New York from the sticks. Joe, I had the time of my life without gettin' stewed or doin' a thing that is against the traffic laws of any religion on earth; can you beat that? Just imagine, I did n't even *see* the makin's of a headache, whilst at the same time they was never a dull moment all the time we was in Paris!

No doubt you will laugh yourself sick at this and say I have gone to work and become the champion long-distance liar of the world, but such is not the case, Joe. I

wanna tell you somethin' about this army life which no doubt you ain't never seen on no draft questionary. Joe, it is the greatest thing on earth I 'll tell the world fair, and if they was a son of mine in it around the age of twenty where a kid begins to hit nothin' but the high places, I 'd sleep comfortable durin' the night and know they was makin' a man outa him! I would n't be sayin': "Where is my wanderin' boy tonight?" — I 'd know he was bein' taken care of better than if he was out shootin' Kelly pool or tryin' to startle Rockefeller with his winnin's at poker. He 'd be doin' his bit like a he-man to make the world a regular place for his own kids to live in, and if he was n't behavin' himself he 'd be in a nice clean guardhouse, and why not?

They is also some more things, Joe, which a guy don't appreciate till he gets in the army. You get good food, a nice clean place to sleep, doctors and medicine as free as fresh air, exercises every day that keep

you where you 'd be willin' to get gay with Jess Willard, and the best-lookin' suit of clothes any man ever put on his back! On top of all that they give you money — can you imagine it? Joe, I have knowed guys which before the war kept the booze factories workin' day and night so 's to keep up with their thirst — and looked it — turned into big strong huskies, healthy as life in the mountains, in no time at all. They 're seein' what the sun looks like for the first time in their lives and livin' on meat and potatoes instead of Rock and Rye. They come down to the camps lookin' like a good, strong sneeze would blow 'em to bits, and in a coupla months their own family don't know 'em, but is darn glad to make their acquaintance. Then take these here Winsome Willies which before they went into the army was so yellah that if they was throwed into a barrel of lemons you would n't know which was the fruit. The captain, which eleven times outa ten is a

regular guy, takes 'em in charge, and by the time they get to France you oughta see them babies go over the top with a baynet — Oh, lady! Say! I 'd rather battle with three of them so-called hard guys than one warmed up Willy boy any day of the week — believe me — I *know!*

Well, Joe, fare-thee-well for the time bein', as the guy said which fell off Pikes Peak.

Yours truly,

Serg't Ed Harmon.

(*HOW ARE YOU FIXED FOR LIBERTY BONDS?*)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I must tell you about our last day in Paris, because they was a few things happened I ain't likely to forget for some time. Me and Jeanne started out with this big buck private Calhoun to have a regular field day before goin' back to toy with the German army again. Jeanne claimed she had a sister livin' in Paris by the name of Marie, which was so good lookin' she balled up traffic every time she crossed the street. She thought she could introduce her to Calhoun so 's we could fix up a little party. Calhoun had enough francs on him to pay off the French army and even allow 'em overtime, so it looked like we was all set for a large day.

The first thing we did was hire a guide on account of Calhoun havin' a friend which told him before he came over that was the proper stunt to do in order to really see Paris. This here friend of his lived in Bird's Nest, Va., and had once been all the way to Richmond, so naturally he knowed what he was talkin' about. The guide we dug up was a knockout, Joe. He claimed he was a Algerian, but notwithstandin' that, he could speak every language known to the world, not to mention a couple he had made up all by himself. I came to find out later he spoke them last two better than any of the others, Joe. He was so little I bet he went up curbstones hand over hand, but he sure was hefty. Out on the farm, Joe, we 'd say this guy was just about fat enough to kill. His complexion and coffee with no milk was the same. Calhoun takes one flash at him and gets a bad case of the hystericals, but Jeanne gets sore.

"This small little *cochon*," she says, "why is he?"

"Sssh!" I says. "He 's liable to get sore and leave us flat. This bird 's a guide — he 's gonna show us Paris."

"He is of a certain not having the good looks," she says.

"Maybe he ain't tryin'," I tells her. "Never mind whether he 's a good looker or not; we did n't hire him for a chorus girl, did we?"

All the time this here little guy stands there grinnin' from one to the other and not sayin' a word.

"Where is the best place to go for somethin' to eat?" I asks him.

"Gazink oofus la gump et pluto," he says, still grinnin'.

Calhoun busts out laughin'.

"Ah knowed this little grampus come from the zoo!" he hollers. "Gazink oofus, hey? Oh, boy!"

Even Jeanne begins to giggle.

"Hey, stupid!" I says to our charmin' guide, grabbin' him by the shoulder, "what are you tryin' to do — kid somebody? I thought you claimed you could speak the English?"

"Alla paza goop gump oofus catawbas!" he says, puttin' all he had on the grin.

"Aw, shut up!" I says. "I oughta bust you in the nose!" I turns to the rest of them, and they is on the verge of death from laughin', Joe. "Stop that stuff!" I hollers, "and gimme a hand here. Jeanne, try this bird out in French."

Well, the wife goes to work on him, and they begin a shoulder-waggin' and hand-wavin' tourney. At the end of ten minutes I had enough.

"Come on!" I says. "I did n't ask you to rehearse an act with him. Can he talk or not?"

"Gazink oofus — " begins this here freak, but I grabbed him.

"If you butt in again, I 'll strangle

you!" I says. "That stuff may get you laughs in that Algeria place you come from, but it 's small-time comedy with me! Where is the best restaurant in Paris, for all you know?"

"Ah!" he says, hittin' himself on the head. "It is sooch long times since I have spik the Engleesh, I forget him. Excuse, please. I will now talk of you with the most fluent. Madam and monsieur would of the dine, then? Let us then be off!"

"I 'm already off of you for life!" I says. "Where 's the nearest highest-priced beanery in this burg?"

"I would offer the Café de la Paix," he says. "It is not too far; come!"

With that he runs out to the middle of the street and begins wavin' his arms around and yellin' like he 's gone nutty. Nobody pays no attention to him except us, until finally he stops one of them there *fiacres,* which is French for a kind of trick carriage they have over here, Joe. It 's all open in

the back, and you simply loll back in it and look at the world with a "Pretty soft for me, hey?" expression on your face. What had prob'ly at one time been a horse was hitched to the front of this thing and, Joe, you should of seen this here brute! I'll betcha if you had took him to a boneyard and tried to park him there for the night, they would of waved you away with sarcastical sneers. At no time was his head over a inch from the ground, and he remind me of a bloodhound sniffin' for the trail of the desperate escaped murderers, or somethin'. His neck was a long lane without no turnin', and he 's featurin' a pair of hips which acted like a windshield by stickin' away up on the sides. I would n't think he was a day older than Noah's old man, and when engaged in walkin' he had a trick shuffle that would make Charlie Chaplin take carbolic outa pure envy.

The steersman of this layout is all dressed up in a white high hat and a apron he bor-

rowed from some garage mechanic which never did nothin' but grease cars all day long.

"Pig!" says our guide to the driver. "Prepare now to drive us to that Café de la Paix with the utmost speed and precision. We will enrich you with two francs. Call me but the one improper name and I will have those gendarmes at your heels!"

The driver give a moan and begins waggin' his head from side to side.

"Playmate of dogs!" he says. "I ask ten francs. I —"

"Enough!" butts in the guide. "That, then, is agreed. Two francs shall be the fee, little pig, with perhaps a centime as a bonus — who can tell?"

Well, Joe, we all climbed into this thing, and the driver and our guide keeps bawlin' each other out in French all durin' the trip. Them guys never let go for a minute, and if they only had dumb-bells in their hands, the way they kept wavin' them around, the

exercise would of done them a world of good. The guide stands up in the carriage and keeps pourin' it into the driver, which never once durin' the entire ride looked ahead to see where he was goin'. Instead, he sits facin' us and give the guide back as good as he got. What they was sayin', Joe, ain't neither here or there, but it 's a cinch they was n't doin' no love makin'.

We go along that way through all the main boulevards and, Joe, the Paris streets is great sights these days, believe me! Even Coney Island would have to hump itself some to make a showin' alongside of 'em, if you can imagine anything like that. They is officers and privates in the uneyforms of every army in the world, Joe, except the Germans and them boobs which is fightin' on their side. These big Scotch babies walk along with them little trick skirts blowin' around, and the first time I seen 'em I thought Ziegfeld's chorus had been drafted, on the level! But, Joe, you ought to see

them birds scrap! Believe me, they know more about fightin' than the guy that wrote it. They is plenty of U. S. uneyforms in the mobs here, Joe, and all in all I think our uneyform is the trimmest and most businesslike-lookin' one of the lot. As far as I am concerned, I know positively that *I* look better than any of these other mixed soldiers, but then I always kinda stood out, Joe, if you know what I mean.

The main thing, of course, is the dames. They is certainly lots of 'em over here, Joe, and most of 'em could make the front row in the Winter Garden without half tryin'. They walk along, laughin' and smilin', and, Joe, they ain't none of 'em deliberately unfriendly, and that 's a cinch! This Calhoun guy kept stretchin' his neck around like it was on ball bearin's all durin' the ride, and all he said was one thing: "*Some* burg!" Joe, he must of said that eight million times!

By some miracle this here horse lasted

out the journey, and finally our delightful trip come to an end. This did n't get me sore, because, Joe, we did n't attract no more attention with that layout than a German flag would of on top of this Ethel Tower. Jeanne went to telephone for her sister, and me and Calhoun went over to get a table outside the Café de la Paix.

Right here, Joe, they was a thing happened which I 'm warnin' you now to be careful of when you get over here. Paris right now is full of con men and dips from the U. S. which is preyin' on the soldier boy, far from home and crazy to pal around with anybody that speaks United States. They 'll take you out and show you around Paris and touch you for everything but your political belief before they get through with you!

A guy in citizen's clothes rushes up to us whilst we are sittin' at the table and slaps me on the back.

" Well, well, well! " he says, holdin' out

his hand. "Of all the guys in the world! Don't you remember me, Jack?"

"No!" I says.

"Why, you come from Peoria, did n't you?" he asks me. "Ain't you Jack Leyton?"

"No!" I says.

He shakes his head.

"Well, well, well!" he says. "You and Jack Leyton ought to certainly meet! I never seen two guys so much alike. I could of swore you was him!" He bends over the table. "Seein' Paris, eh?" he says and winks. "Wanna go where you can have a *real* time?" Joe, he laughs, but his eyes did n't. Did you ever meet up with a guy that you wanted to bust in the nose right away for luck? This bird was that!

"No!" I says.

He tried his luck again.

"Listen!" he says. "I come from Iowa, and I 'm busted here for the time bein'. I expect a cable from my wealthy father

which is a rich millionaire and J. P. Morgan's right-hand man. He 'll prob'ly send me fifty thousand or so the minute he gets around to it. I ain't got a nickel right now. Could you loan me fifty bucks till I get it?"

"No!" I says.

"What?" he hollers. "You 'd leave a guy from your own country flat in a strange land?"

"Yes!" I says. "Listen! You ain't broke — they 's too many suckers here for that. You never seen Iowa; you 're a New York con man. The only cable you expect is one from the New York police askin' the Paris cops to start you back to dear old Sing Sing again. If I see you botherin' any more of the boys here, I 'll beat you up first and then have you pinched! Now, on your way — get me?"

"All right, pal," he says. "My mistake!"

He starts away, and a waiter nails him with a check. Joe, you ought to of seen the

roll this guy pulled out to pay it with. It must of took weeks for him to print it!

"How did you-all know that scorpion was a New York crook?" says Calhoun. "I thought he was sure enough broke, and would have give him ten, anyways."

"I did n't!" I says. "But they 's many a worse guesser than me! If all them guys whose fathers is J. P. Morgan's right-hand men was tellin' the truth, Morgan would n't be able to get into his office in the mornin's — they would n't be no room!"

So you wanna be careful when you get over here, Joe, and hang onto your dough. That 's if you got any. You 'll no doubt lose yours on the way over, bettin' how many waves they is in the ocean or somethin' — not meanin' no reflections on you as a boob or nothin', Joe.

Yours truly,

Serg't Ed Harmon.

(*How is the Giants makin' out, Joe?*)

III

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I have a lot of things to tell you, includin' bein' up in an areyoplane and gettin' recommended for a commission on account of it. I guess, however, I 'll start in where I left off in my last, because I know you have been prob'ly no doubt stayin' up all night to get a letter tellin' of the finish of that trip to Paris — hey, Joe?

Where did I leave off? Oh, yes — we was at the Café de la Paix gettin' ready for the eats. Well, Joe, Jeanne come back with her sister Marie, and, Joe, I 'm sorry I could not of saved this one for you! Believe me, she is *some* doll, and the minute she sit at our table they was a epidemic of twisted necks took place. You know, Joe,

these here French dames knows more about dressin' than Columbus did about real estate, and you can imagine what a commotion two knockouts like Marie and Jeanne caused, by bein' at the same table with me and Calhoun. Joe, they must of been a hundred doughboys tried to get acquainted with me in the next five minutes. I leave it to you whether they did or not. Don't get the idea, Joe, that this here Marie has got anything on Jeanne when it comes to bein' a good-looker. Why, Joe, Jeanne would make Venus look like a washwoman after a tough day at the tubs!

Well, Calhoun is anxious to show off in front of Marie, which he had fell for so hard he liked to broke her neck, so he claims he 'll order the dinner. The menu is all in French, and Calhoun studies it long enough to have recited it blindfolded, if only he had a idea of what he was readin'. Finally he says: "Well, let 's start off with a bottle of nice, cold *eau,* anyways."

"A bottle of O what?" I says.

"*Eau* is water, you bonehead!" says Calhoun. He turns to the waiter, "C'mon now!" he says, waggin' his shoulders and wavin' his hands like he seen the French guys do. "Look—see—Aha!—one bottle of *eau!*"

The waiter looks stupider than usual, and turns to the girls, shakin' his shoulders. This here seems to get Calhoun's goat.

"*Eau, eau!*" he hollers. "*Eau, eau, eau, eau, eau, eau, eau!*" till he gets red in the face.

Everybody sittin' around is lookin' at us, and I thought the girls and me would die of the hystericals. Up comes the manager.

"Monsieur has then the pain?" he says. "Otherwise why should he make the shouting of Oh, oh, oh?"

Calhoun is game. "Look yere!" he whispers to Jeanne. "How do you all ordah soup, chops, and salad in French?

Ah don't like your sistah to think I 'm a boob!"

Jeanne turns that million-dollar smile on him. "*Oui, oui!*" she says, noddin' her head. "You must then say: *Potage, une cotellette avec de la salade.*"

"What 's that again?" says Calhoun, pushin' back his chair.

Jeanne repeats the thing.

"Oh, boy!" says Calhoun. "Ah nevah could say that in a million yeahs — let 's let it go at ham and eggs!"

"One minute!" I says. "The way *I* understand it, we come here to eat. Let Jeanne order the meal, and I 'll pay for it. Anything she orders is good enough for me!"

Joe, you oughta see the smile she gimme. I did n't care whether I ever eat or not!

Well, we had *some* feed, Joe. Everything from soup to finger bowls and anything that made a hit we played twice. I

wanna tell you right now that the food over here is the finest in the world, except the bread. Joe, that don't go! It 's all made by bakers which learned their trade in a blacksmith shop, and it 's the same as eatin' pieces of brown sponges, except maybe the sponges is tastier. However, they got a war on here, and you gotta expect *some* hardships — hey, Joe? Wait till *we* been in this scuffle a little while longer, Joe, and, believe me, we 'll have to give up a lot of things to help win it the same as everybody else! These birds over in the U. S. which is kickin' about payin' an extry income tax, buyin' Liberty Bonds, helpin' the Red Cross, and so forth, don't know what 's comin'! Joe, believe me, the dear old *Etat Unis* don't really know it 's *in* the war yet. Compared to everybody else, we 're gettin' outa this soft — we ain't had to do *nothin'!* And, Joe, where does them guys which is watchin' the thing from the wrong side of the ocean get off to kick about coughin' up?

Look what us doughboys is proud and willin' to give, eh?

Well, Joe, we had left the restaurant about ten minutes and is strollin' down the Rue de la Paix when they is a terrible explosion. People stops dead and looks at each other, but they is no excitement. Then a lot of whistles begin to blow, and it reminds me of New Year's Eve on Broadway. A lot of French cops comes ridin' around on bicycles, tellin' everybody to duck inside the doors. Jeanne and Marie gets a little pale, and I thought this here trick guide of ours was gonna pass right away then and there. He was the only one in all that mob of people that looked really scared — and he was n't French!

"What 's the idea?" I hollers, shakin' him. "What 's comin' off?"

"Ah, monsieur!" he chatters. "Flee, I of the beseech you! It is the air raid — the *boches* — we will of the certainty be kill'! We —"

"Shut up, you little tramp!" I yells. "D' ye want them Germans to get the idea they 're scarin' somebody? They ain't no boches livin' can kill me — they 's a lot of them tried it! They — "

Joe, just then they is another explosion, a little louder than the first, if that 's possible. I heard that noise before a lot of times out at the front, and I knowed what it was. It was a shell, Joe, and from the sound it must of been a lulu!

Well, I can't figure the thing out, Joe. I know they ain't no Germans close enough to Paris to bombard it, and at the same time we don't see no areyoplanes, but whilst I 'm trying to dope it — Zammm!!!!! off goes another one!

With that the guide beats it, and from the way he was travelin' he must of made that Algeria place the first hour!

Well, Joe, the shellin' kept up for quite a while, and about every fifteen minutes one of them babies burst, in or around Paris.

We heard afterward it was a sure enough German cannon that was doin' the shootin', although they is plenty of guys, includin' myself, that would like to see that gun first before bettin' on it! Them big yellah stiffs killed some women and kids again, which is their specialty, but they did n't scare nobody in Paris as far as I could see except that there guide. Anyhow, Joe, you can see the Kaiser never expects to reach Paris with no army, or he would n't have rigged up a gun which could throw a shell as far as that — hey, Joe? Them guys better get to work on a cannon that 'll shoot about three million miles, because when we get through with them they 'll be that far away from France!

Joe, we took Jeanne and Marie home and seen they was fixed up so 's they 'd be fairly safe from them rotten hounds who's motto is "Women and children first!" only meanin' it the wrong way! I could n't get Jeanne to come back with me, because she

would n't leave her sister alone whilst this here bombardment was goin' on. I raved and hollered murder, but they was nothin' stirrin'.

" Be not of the afraid," she tells me when I 'm leavin' her. " You will be in more of the peril than Jeanne, *mon chéri.* I am French, and I can be veree brave too! If something should happen to me, well — I will try to die as bravely as I know you would out in the trench, of the certainty — but, poof! This *boche*, he cannot frighten Jeanne! "

Joe, them 's the kinda people these Germans is tryin' to beat! A fat chance — hey, Joe?

Yours truly,

Serg't Ed Harmon.

(Joe, if them guys hurts Jeanne, just killin' 'em will never satisfy me!)

IV

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I forgot to tell you about me bein' up in the areyoplane in my last letter and will do the same in this. It was one of the most excitin' experiences I have had so far and come near bein' the last. I suppose no doubt you have read about it in the papers by this time, but I will now hand you the real inside dope on it, provided the censors is willin'. Them censor guys gets my goat, Joe, because a guy can write a letter home and for all he knows they won't be nothin' but his signature on it by the time it reaches the other side, if it ever does. You can't mention no towns, dates, outfits or the like; in fact, you can't hardly say anything. Joe, them censors would of been tough in the olden days, hey?

Take the operas, for instance — why, them guys would n't of let William *Tell*. That there 's a joke, Joe, I have just found out after I wrote it. I discovered it all by myself. You prob'ly won't get it, not that you 're no thicker than the average, Joe, but you better repeat it aloud to somebody and have them show you where the laugh is. Then you let me know and I 'll tell you if you got it right.

Well, after I have said good-by to Jeanne that day and also Calhoun, whose leave was up before mine and has got to get right back, who do I meet on the Boulevard de la Madeleine but no less than Slim White! You no doubt remember Slim; he used to be with the Cubs and claimed he was a ball player. Well, Joe, if he was a ball player, then I used to form'ly be King of Africa, but that 's neither here or there. Slim enlisted and got in the aviation with them guys of the Lafayette Escalator, and I think I told you some time ago I had met up

with him over here. He got to be quite a aviator and brung down two German flyers or two hundred, whichever you wanna believe, me or Slim. Well, Joe, I bump into him, and he asks me where I 'm goin'. I says eventually Berlin, but right now back to this here French burg where we are holdin' the line.

"C'mon back with me!" says Slim. "I gotta get away from here in a hour, and I 'll take you back in my plane."

"Ha, ha!" I says. "Don't make me laugh! I would n't get in one of them areyoplanes for a cut of the Liberty Loan!"

"You big boob!" he says. "I 'm offerin' you the chance of a lifetime. They is guys would give millions for the experience!"

"All right!" I says. "Go get 'em! I don't want you to lose no money on my account!"

"Well, you big stiff," he says, "here I am offerin' you a chance to do somethin'

you never done yet, and you throw me down!"

"I ain't never crossed the Rocky Mountains on roller skates yet either," I says, "but that don't say I wanna do it!"

"I see you 're still yellah!" he says. "So long!"

"If I was yellah, I would n't be here!" I hollers, losin' all control. "Bring on your areyoplane; I 'll go anywheres *you* will!"

Well, Joe, them words come near bein' my downfall, and a thing like that in an areyoplane ain't no joke! We go out to the field where Slim 's got the machine stored, and they was a lot of guys flyin' around in the air, doin' fancy stunts and the like. Joe, they was sailin' along so nice and easy it looked like anybody could do it and why not, but looks in this case is certainly deceivin', I 'll tell the world fair! A lot of mechanics brung out Slim's machine, which contains two seats among other things, and

they is a machine gun mounted on one of 'em. They started up the motor and — oh, lady! Joe, I been in ample battles over here, but I, you, or nobody else ain't ever heard no noise like this baby made. I once had a second-hand auto, and when you started it in first speed it used to send everybody runnin' to cover from the noise, thinkin', well, here 's another earthquake; but this areyoplane motor would of made that quit like a dog, Joe!

" Get in the seat where the gun is! " yells Slim after I have been give four coats, a football headpiece, and goggles to put on.

Joe, I give a look up at the sky and listened to that there motor for a minute.

" I 'll tell you, Slim," I says, " I think I better go up next Friday, hey? "

" Get in, yellah! " he bawls.

I got in, Joe.

Well, we start to roll along over the ground with a lot of guys holdin' on the back, and pretty soon they let go and we

started up in the air. We kept on doin' that, and, Joe, I felt I was closer to heaven than I ever had been before in my life, in more ways than one. I took a look down over the side and — oh, boy! Joe, people looked like gnats and buildin's was cubes of sugar! They was a gauge on this thing which claimed we was goin' ninety miles an hour, and, believe me, Joe, I was wishin' we would n't do no skiddin' or have no blowouts! Pretty soon the needle on the gauge moves up to 100, and I begin to look around for motorcycle cops, till I remembered that 's one curse areyoplanin' is free from.

We shoot along like that until we finally get right over our lines, and I happened to look up and see another areyoplane comin' toward us.

"Look, Slim!" I hollers in his ear. "We got company!"

He twists around and looks, Joe, and then he gets as pale as a ghost. We swung

around in a circle and started to climb up until I figured Slim was gonna drop in on St. Peter for a friendly call. This other areyoplane starts up after us, and believe me it 's travelin' some! It got closer and closer every minute.

"Can you handle that machine gun?" hollers Slim.

"Yeh!" I hollers back. "But I thought this was a pleasure trip and —"

"Shut up!" bawls Slim. "Provided you wanna live out the day! I 'm gonna climb up over this guy and when I tell you to shoot, you start workin' that gun! It 's the only chance we got. That bird is a German, and he brung down two of our machines only yesterday. If we get this guy, it may mean a commission; if we *don't* — well, you and me is all through with livin'!"

Oh, boy!

Joe, can you imagine my feelin's? A mile up in the air and in a tight hole like

this! I must of eat somethin' for breakfast that did n't set right, Joe, because I sure got sick to my stomach, now believe me! I ain't no hero, Joe, I 'm human! I give this machine gun a quick once over and she was workin' great and then I looked down over the side through the glass and I seen that everybody on both sides of the lines was watchin' the thing.

Joe, this German guy was *some* flyer! He twirled and twisted around like a nutty bat or somethin', and once I thought he was gonna drive his machine right into us. If he had, we would of got the worst of it, because his areyoplane was twice as big as ours and had three guys in it. In about one second more they open up with their gun and, Joe, it begins to hail bullets! One of them chipped a slice off our propeller and another cut a stay outa one of the wings. Them things kept singin' all around us and I had a fearful time with myself to keep

from turnin' loose with my gun, but I waited for Slim's orders, bein' a soldier.

"Go to it, Slim!" I hollers. "They ain't hit neither of us yet!"

"I don't care if they hit either of *us* or not!" he hollers back. "I 'm hoping they don't hit the gas tank or the motor — that 's all!"

Well, Joe, that 's just what happened the next minute! They cut loose again and one of them bullets put a hole in the gas tank, and the motor begin to miss. "Good *night!*" I says to myself, and then Slim turns around and yells:

"Go on, Ed, turn that baby loose and give them squareheads Hell!"

Joe, I did that thing! They was one guy shootin' at us with a automatic and I got *that* bird first. Then I devoted all the rest of my time to their motor. Joe, we was in bad shape ourselves, but you ought to of seen Slim drive that areyoplane. I think he must of been holdin' us up with will

power instead of horsepower! Them stiffs got Slim in the arm with a lucky shot, and in another second I stopped one with my bum shoulder, but I keep that gun clickin' like a busy typewriter. Both of us is droppin' lower all the time, and it 's only a question of who will quit first. Well, Joe, the Germans got enough and decided to call it a day. They start back to their own lines, cuttin' all kinds of crazy circles in the air. I must of got them in the motor, because they started to coast down with us right on their tail. Then, Joe, they swung around all of a sudden and tried to climb up. I had a thing as big as the side of a barn to shoot at for a second, and I give them all I had in stock. Joe, that German areyoplane crumbled up like paper and dropped to the ground, with flames shootin' out of it like a skyrocket!

I don't know how we ever made a landin', but we got down all right behind our lines, and about a million guys come runnin' over

to us, cheerin' and throwin' up their hats. Even the officers was excited, which is unusual. Slim had to be lifted out, because he had gone to work and fainted, but I was all O. K. except for a trifle skin scraped off of my shoulder. Our captain comes runnin' up and shakes my hand.

"Harmon," he says, "you are positively a wonder! I never know what you 'll do next. I 'm going to recommend you for a commission this very day!"

"Thanks!" I says. "Say, captain, I think New York has got it on Paris eighty ways. I met a guy there that never heard tell of the Polo Grounds—ain't that rich?"

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

(They ain't no use for me to sign "Sergeant," Joe, because for all I know I 'm a admiral by now, hey?)

EIGHTH INNING

EIGHTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I have gone to work and shook the hand of no less than General Pershing. No doubt you have heard of him: he 's the manager of the American team which is tryin' for the pennant over here in France. Joe, he 's one regular guy if they ever was one! He looks like Rockefeller's income in his uneyform too, Joe, and the French people is wild over him and do everything for him outside of pronouncin' his name right. A few days after me and Slim White brung down that German areyoplane whilst comin' back from Paris, they was rumors runnin' around wild that Gen. Pershing was comin' to visit our sector. Our captain, which same I will

soon be pallin' around with, provided he 's on the level with promisin' me a commission, sends for me and claims he has a surprise in store for me. He says can I guess what it is.

" I have no doubt been made deputy admiral in the aviation," I says, thinkin' a job like that would be about right for what I had did.

He gimme a laugh.

" No," he says. " But General Pershing will be here to-day and, having had a report from me of your activities since you 've been in France, he has expressed a desire to see you. I am going to use my influence in an effort to have the general act favorably upon a recommendation that you be commissioned."

" Thank you, sir!" I says, with a bow I stole from Jeanne, my charmin' young bride. " If I can grab a chance, I 'll put in a good word for you too!"

I figured I could be a good feller the same as him — heh, Joe?

Joe, he gets all red, prob'ly from simple embarrassment at my bein' so big-hearted, and he coughs a coupla times.

"Eh, that will not be necessary, Harmon!" he says. "Now, there is something I want to warn you about in advance, should the general speak to you. You must be most respectful in your answers, for the general might not understand that — eh — rather free-and-easy address of yours, and he is a great stickler for the strictest military etiquette at all times — do you understand?"

"That 's all right, sir," I says. "If Gen. Pershing gets talkin' with me, I 'll try and make him feel at ease."

Was n't I right, Joe? Why should I put on airs and get stuck up, simply because I massacred a couple dozen Germans — ain't that what I 'm gettin' paid for?

Well, Joe, the captain must of thought of somethin' funny, because he begin to grin and waved his hands for me to leave.

About three o'clock in the afternoon I am sent for again, Joe, and this time when I get to the captain's dugout I see they is a lot of officers standin' around at attention. Also they is a couple second-hand automobiles with French soldiers in 'em, and from all signs, Joe, it looked like the Earl of Belgium or somethin' of the sort had come to look us over. I wait outside until the captain's orderly gimme the sign to enter, which same I did with firm and steady tread, as the papers always says of a guy which is on his way to get hung.

Sittin' at a table is Gen. Pershing and a couple other big leaguers, and standin' around is our captain and his staff of lieutenants. The captain salutes and says: "General, this is Sergeant Harmon, who you desired to see."

With that we had a salutin' spree all around, and I like to wore my arm out, Joe. The general looks me over till I felt as nervous as a guy awaitin' his first jail sen-

tence and the judge known to be severe. Here I am up before the boss of the whole American army, Joe, and I ain't even got a clean collar on. Gen. Pershing is a stern-lookin' guy, and the way he 's gazin' from me to a long piece of paper he 's got in his hand, I can't figure out if he 's friendly or is contemplatin' leapin' up and bustin' me one in the nose for luck!

Fin'ly, just when I 'm ready to give way under the strain and make a crack of some kind, so 's we can get the conversation goin' and be done with it, Gen. Pershing smiles.

" Sergeant," he says, " allow me to congratulate you. It appears from the report of your captain that you have done your bit with a vengeance. I wish I had a million men like you! "

Joe, with that he gets up and shakes my hand. He 's a good guy, heh?

" Much obliged, sir! " I says and stands there like a boob, with my face as hot and red as a four-alarm fire.

They is another one of them pause things, Joe, and the captain hisses in my ear: "*Say something!*"

Well, Joe, here they are lookin' at me and waitin', and I like to bust my brains tryin' to think of somethin' to say to make the general feel at home. They is nothin' stirrin'. Fin'ly I took a chance.

"Ahumph!" I says. "I — ahh — I hear you are livin' in Paris for the time bein', general, and I know what a gloom burg that is for a American which don't know nobody and can't speak the French. I have grabbed off a lotta friends there now, and I 'll give you a letter to them, tellin' 'em who you are. Any time you want you can go down there, sir, and if you mention my name they 'll see that you don't yawn yourself to death, anyways!"

Well, Joe, Gen. Pershing straightens up and looks at me like he 's overcome with the generosity of my offer. I thought all the other officers was gonna faint dead

away, and our captain gimme a terrible look. I 'll betcha they was all a bit sore because I did n't declare *them* in on it — hey, Joe? For almost a minute they was n't a sound, outside of the rats doin' their daily marathon around the dugout. Gen. Pershing keeps lookin' straight at my eyes, and I must say, Joe, that I never received such a piercin' glance in my life from no man. I looked right back, grinnin' pleasantly, so 's he could see I was on the level with my offer and simply wanted to do the right thing so 's he would n't have to roam around Paris all by himself. Fin'ly, Joe, the general begins to grin and all the other officers lets down and does the same.

"Very well, sergeant," says Gen. Pershing, "I am sure I would be very glad to take advantage of your kindness — but I 'm afraid I 'll be too busy for quite some time yet!" He looks around, smilin' at the other guys.

"This here war sure does cut into a guy's

afternoons, don't it, sir?" I says, very respectful like the captain told me and noddin' my head with sympathy.

Joe, they was two young lieutenants developed coughin' fits and a major excused himself and went outside. You oughta seen the way the rest of them birds looked at me. You 'd think I was a new kind of fish or somethin', Joe.

"Are you the former ball player named Harmon?" asks the general.

Look, Joe, when a guy is famous he 's knowed everywhere! I 'll betcha to this day they 's plenty of people which has heard about Napoleon and Columbus — hey, Joe?

"Yes, sir," I says, "I 'm no less than Marvelous Ed Harmon, form'ly knowed as the Speed King! When I was good I had more curves than a corkscrew, and when it come to control, I could hit a gnat in the eye with a pea at forty yards. As for speed, oh, boy! Well, my fast one would make a bullet lay down and quit!"

I could of told him more, Joe, like what a good pitcher I was, and the like, but I hate a guy that blows about himself! They 's nothin' like a little modesty, especially before strangers — hey, Joe?

" I often saw you pitch when I was in Washington," says the general. " It 's quite a change from the diamond to the trenches, eh? "

" I ain't kickin', sir," I says. " I 'm gettin' well took care of at no expense to me, and I don't have to stand for a lot of abuse from a mob of boneheads in the bleachers — all I gotta duck here is bullets! And they 's another thing, sir. When I go in a trench here and get busy with a machine gun, they 's one thing I used to hear when I was a pitcher that nobody yells at me now! "

" What is that? " asks the general.

" *Take him out!* " I says.

Well, Joe, we all partook of a good laugh, and then the general asks me if I am satis-

fied with the way I am treated, or do I want anything.

"Well, sir," I says, "if it 's all the same to you, I 'd like to get a job as assistant colonel or somethin', because since comin' here I 'd wed the champion girl of the world, and the dough I 'm draggin' down now would n't keep her in nail files!"

He taps the table with his fingers for a minute and then he looks up at me.

"You have been recommended for a commission, sergeant," he says, "but it will be necessary for you to pass a rather rigid technical examination to try for it. What would you say if I appointed you an aid to the American Military Headquarters in Paris? You would be out of the trenches for a while, and perhaps your wife could take a home in Paris temporarily. The pay would be much higher than your present remuneration."

"The Germans ain't in Paris, are they?" I says.

"Certainly not!" he tells me.

"Then, sir, I 'm much obliged, but it 's all off!" I says. "I don't want to be nowheres except where they 's scrappin'. I could of had manys the office job before I got in the infantry, but I guess I can't stand the smell of ink, or somethin'. If that 's the best I can do, I 'll have to worry along as a sergeant till one of the rear admirals quits, or somethin', sir. I made up my mind to give them Germans the trimmin' of their lives after what I seen 'em do, and I can have twice as much fun with a baynet, sir, as I can with a fountain pen!"

"But how about your wife?" he says. "Don't you think she 'd prefer to have you out of danger?"

"Not this dame; no, sir!" I says. "Jeanne would never of married me if she thought I was yellah, and if I produced a streak now the bonds of matrimony is twelve feet too thin to hold her to me! Believe me, sir, this Jeanne is considerable

girl. If she 'd of been in the Garden of Eden, Adam would n't of knowed Eve from a giraffe!"

The general smiles and remarks that I got the right stuff in me and he is proud of the kind of guys America is sendin' over to him. Then he picks up his gloves, which is the signal that the party is all broke up for the day. He claims he hopes to hear more of me and that I got an A1 chance of bein' an officer. Before I went out I heard him tell our captain to see that I got fitted with a set of books to study to help me over the examination and to put me wise to the dope I gotta know. The captain is as tickled as I am, because he was afraid I would get in dutch with Gen. Pershing, instead of which I turned out to be a riot.

Joe, as I was goin' back to where our outfit is they was a thing happened that gimme a laugh, so I will pass it on to you. The only thing is, Joe, I 'm afraid that immediately on readin' it you 'll go to work

and tell it around the cantonment where they are tryin' to make a doughboy outa you as one of your own jokes. You know, Joe, you always had a bad habit of forgettin' to state plainly in talkin' just where you read or heard any particular thing which broke up your usually stupid line of chatter. Not meanin' nothin' wrong, Joe. I remember they was one funny thing you said once which was no doubt original and which gimme the hystericals. Remember the time you says to me: " Ed, lend me twenty bucks for a week? "

Well, anyways, I had to go back through the trenches which is occupied by them colored troops which I told you was here. It was pretty quiet at the time, as the German artillery had laid off to get shaved, or somethin', and a bunch of these babies is shootin' crap. Joe, the air is full of: " Baby needs shoes! " — " Come on, little fever! " — " Ha, Big Dick from Boston! " and " Ten of them franc things he don't seven! "

Well, Joe, they was one little sawed-off colored guy which could n't of been five feet high, but carried a pair of shoulders on him like walkin' beams and had a chest like a barrel. He 's standin' off to one side, and when he seen me he saluted and stepped aside so 's I could pass.

"Why ain't *you* in that crap tourney?" I asks him.

"Boss," he says, "Ah *been* in it! Them niggers has took me for all I got but mah color! Ah not only completely and absolutely lost all this yere trick French money Ah had on me, but for the next two months mah salary has got to be split between four different men — and Ah ain't one of them!"

"Cheer up!" I says. "Them squareheads is liable to pull off a raid to-night, and maybe you won't have to pay off at all!"

"Poof!" he says. "Them Germans can't hurt *nobody!* I thought this yere was a real wah, instead of that Ah been in this

yere little ole trench three days and it 's as quiet as a cemetery on a rainy Sunday. Ah don't believe there 's been four bullets breezed back and forth between us. Sergeant, Ah seen more complete excitement in a Mobile poker game than Ah seen since Ah been in France! Ah craves action, Ah does — Ah come over yere to fight, and, believe me, Ah 'm gonna git in a muss if Ah has to go out and do a clog dance in No Man's Land to git it!"

With that, in order to show off in front of me, Joe, he starts climbin' up to the top of the trench, hand over hand. I hollered after him to come down, and a lot of other guys starts runnin' toward him, but he keeps on goin' up and talkin' all the time to himself. Fin'ly he gets to the top and stands right on the parapet of the trench, a mark for a squarehead sharpshooter.

"Come on!" he hollers, wavin' his hat in the air. "Come on ovah yere, you German quitters! Come on, show me somethin'.

Ah ain't afraid of nothin' or nobody! Ah eats bullets and Ah cleans mah teeth wiff baynets! Come on and cut loose! Bring on them bullets, bring on them guns, bring on them shells, bring on that shrapnel, bring on—"

Zam!!!!!!

Joe, just then they was a shell hit about ten yards from where this bird is standin' yellin' for action, and about forty feet of trench give way and buried him under it. It took about three minutes to dig him out, and he 's almost suffocated with dirt and dust. He sits up and looks around kinda dazed, and one of the crap shooters is standin' over him, doubled up with the hystericals.

"Ha, ha!" hollers the crap shooter. "Look at this yere man eater! Bring on them bullets, Ah eats 'em, hey? Bring on them shells, hey? Ha, ha! Bring on—"

"Well, Ah must say one thing!" butts in the little guy, droppin' a tooth which

was of no more use to him, " a man sure do git *service* ovah yere, anyways! "

Yours truly,

ED HARMON, Sergt.

(Joe, I hear a officer has got to buy his own uneyform, so now I hardly know what to do. They ain't no percentage in that, is they?)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, they ain't no travelin' salesman or advance agent in the world which has got a thing on me. Before I get through I will of seen more places and met more different kinds of people than a opium fiend ever did on the biggest night he had! That simply goes to show you what joinin' the war will do for a guy. If I had n't enlisted, Joe, I never would of seen Paris, London, or Berlin, because the American League has got enough cities in it as it is and jumps like that would make a bum outa the profits — heh, Joe? Of course I ain't been to Berlin *yet*, but I 'm in the American army, Joe, and I leave it to you whether I 'll get there or not, hey?

I have been to London, Joe, since the last

time I dashed off a billy doo to you, and, believe me, after what I went through in that burg I was glad to get back to the trenches again, where it ain't so noisy and a guy 's got a chance for his life! Them German rats must of heard I was goin' over, or somethin', because what do they do but pull off a air raid on me and Jeanne, not to say the population of London.

I suppose no doubt you are wonderin' what I was doin' in London, when the last you heard the war was in France. Well, I 'll tell you how it come off. You no doubt remember that our captain sent me to Paris with a letter from Gen. Pershing. Well, Joe, I turned out to be such a knockout as a postman that when they get another important letter to deliver somewheres, it 's only natural that they pick me out for the job, ain't it? Of course I could of stayed right in New York if I wanted to be a letter carrier, and they would even of give me a whistle to play with, but that ain't neither

here or there. It seems they has been a leak somewheres in the mail between the base camps in France and American Headquarters in London, and they is some important orders and the like that they wish delivered by hand. So our captain elects me to take 'em over.

"Harmon," he says, "I have another important mission for you which will give you an opportunity to see London. I may add that you made a very favorable impression upon General Pershing."

"He ain't a bad guy himself when you get to know him, sir, heh?" I says.

"No comment is necessary, sergeant!" he says, very sharp and coughin' for a minute. He hands me a long envelope. "You will deliver this to Colonel —— at the American Headquarters in Grosvenor Gardens, London, and report back immediately. Your passage there and back will be facilitated, and you are allowed but one week for the trip."

"That ain't givin' me much of a chance for a flash at the King, is it, sir?" I says. "I ain't never seen a king, except one time when I held a pair of aces and was lookin' for another one of the same. However, a guy can't get everything. Captain, they is one favor I would like to ask before I set forth for sweet old Great Britain and Ireland."

"Well, what is it?" he says.

"I would like to take Jeanne, my newly made bride, with me," I says, "because she has just come back from Paris, and here I am goin' away almost the same day."

He gimme a frown.

"The United States army has nothing to do with your domestic arrangements," he says.

"No doubt," I says, "but, sir, if the United States army had n't brung me over here, I prob'ly never would of gone to work and got wed!"

I seen all his front teeth.

"Harmon," he says, "you are irrepressible! I will see what can be done."

Well, Joe, with that I went over to place the case before Jeanne, which is livin' for the time bein' in this French burg where we are quartered.

"Jeanne," I says, "I got some more good news for you. I am goin' to nothin' less than dear old London!"

She throwed up her hands and commenced waggin' her head.

"*C'est possible!*" she says. "But why is it always *you* they send?"

"I don't know," I says. "I must be teacher's pet, I guess." I put my arms around her, and why not. "Listen!" I says, "don't go turnin' on the weeps, because I may be able to frame it so 's you can go with me."

"But how then!" she says, nothin' but smiles. "I will be of the delight! I will wear my dress of the blue silk. Edouard, *mon chéri,* you are indeed of the charming!"

"Ain't I?" I says. "Believe me, it runs in the family. I got a brother back in the *Etat Unis* which has broke up many a home and him not half as good lookin' as me!"

"Edouard, what mean you?" she says, drawin' back. "I not like it this breaking up of the home."

"You don't get me," I says. "My brother is a furniture mover!"

Joe, it went over her head like a areyoplane. Still, a girl can't have everything, and she 's an awful good looker, Joe, believe me!

Well, Joe, the captain says I can take Jeanne with me for all of him, if only she can get a passport. He will stake me to a note that she 's my wife and I am goin' to London on official business, but that lets him out. We get all packed for a long journey and go up to the passport office. Joe, we did n't have no more trouble gettin' Jeanne a passport than the Germans is havin' in gettin' to Paris. They was a little

French guy in charge of the office, and I think he must of been the guy that invented insurance policies and applications for jobs with joints like the Standard Oil Company or somethin', because he knowed all the questions in the world and asked 'em twice for luck. We come near havin' a run in, Joe, when he demands a coupla photos of Jeanne.

"Nothin' stirrin'!" I says. "Where d' ye get that photo stuff?"

"That picture of madame, I must have it of a certain," he says, castin' a smile at Jeanne that abducted my goat. "It is of the most necessary to put on the passport. If not so, how will one know that madame is in truth herself who has the passport?"

"She can tell 'em, can't she?" I says.

"Aha, but if they do not believe?" he says.

"Then they 're outa luck," I says, "because I will of the most certain bust 'em in the nose!"

Well, Joe, we fin'ly fixed it up without no bloodshed and grab the next train for Havre, where we get the boat for England. Joe, this Havre place is a steal on Coney Island, without the amusements, lights, and hot dogs. The connections with the train and the Channel boat is great, and we only had to wait seven hours. Before we could get on this burlesque of a ocean liner which expected to take us across, we had to go through all the customs and passport inspectors in Europe. By the time we had gone through three sets of 'em, Joe, Jeanne is all in and I am sore and don't care whether I ever see England or not, not that I ain't pro-Alley. They is one little guy with a mustache so sharp on the ends that he could of shaved the rest of his face with it, and he asks me thirty-four times to produce some papers showin' that Jeanne is actually my wife. Joe, I absolutely lost my goat!

"Listen, feller!" I says, leanin' over him,

"I have give you a pass from General Pershing allowin' me to go anywheres. I have told you time and time again that this here girl is my lawful wife — I ain't gonna tell you no more! If you don't quit askin' me that and pass us through to the boat, you 'll wish to Heavens they had drafted you into the army instead of stakin' you to a desk job, believe me!"

Joe, to show how scared he was, he rubs his hands in his hair, throws what he prob'ly thought was a pleasant smile at Jeanne and says: "But of that I know not. I desire to know only this — madame of the charming, she is *la femme* — what you say — your wife?"

Joe, I was furious with simple rage! I had tried him with "Yes," so now I hollers at the top of my voice:

"*No* — you little stiff!"

Everybody looked around, Joe, and he give a jump and O. K.'d Jeanne's passport.

I asked them to show me my room on

the boat, and the steward come back with the startlin' information that they is none reserved for me. I told him to get me one, and he fin'ly come back and says he can get me a elegant stateroom for a pound.

"A pound of what?" I says, thinkin' he 's trying to kid me.

"A pound, sir," he says. "Just a pound, that 's all, sir."

"I ain't got a pound of nothin' with me," I says. "How about a coupla ounces and a quart, will that do?"

They is a Canadian guy standin' there, Joe, and he says a pound is English money, worth about five bucks in ours. I had forgot to change my bank roll into English, so we fixed it up in French. It was easy, Joe. I simply give him all the loose francs I had and let it go at that.

Well, we get into this stateroom, which was the same as one on the night boat to Albany, Joe, with the exception that they was no towels, soap, water, heat, lookin'-

glasses, air, or chairs. I am just layin' down Jeanne's suit case when a guy raps on the door. I opened it, and there 's one of them boobs from the dock which has asked us all the questions. He grabs out a notebook.

" Why are you of the desire to proceed to England? " he asks me, settin' himself like that 's only the first of a hundred questions he 's got ready.

Joe, this here was the last straw! Jeanne grabbed my arm or I would of bounced him then and there.

" Because," I hollers, " they ain't no way I can figure of havin' it brought over here to me! "

With that I slammed the door and, after knockin' in vain for a few minutes, he beat it.

Well, Joe, I ain't liable to forget that trip across for a long time. The boat did n't leave until eleven at night, and we had a coupla hours to wait. Jeanne went to sleep, and I went up on deck to chum around with

our fellow passengers, as they say on the steamship companies' folders. They was pretty near all soldiers of one kind or another, mostly wounded English Tommies which was goin' home for a vacation, and so forth. You know how I mix, Joe, and in a few minutes we was all swappin' lies and cigarettes. Fin'ly we adjourned to the smokin' room.

We are all sittin' there talkin', Joe, with one of the stewards which from his actions was violently opposed to prohibition, when a civilian comes along and joins us. He 's a big fat husky, with glasses and a trick whisker, and, Joe, he don't look good to me! They is no public demand for the information, but he claims he 's a American named Brown which has come over on some war contracts and he asks what part of America I come from. I says North America, Joe, but that don't feaze him a bit. Then he remarks that the war is a terrible thing with everybody gettin' killed, and what 's the

use? The English guys get sore and beat it, and I says to him that it 's the best war I ever been in and I ain't gonna stand for no noncombatant knockin' it! He laughs it off, Joe, and begins to talk to the steward, which by this time has tried out all the cracked ice in the place, givin' it the Scotch and soda test.

They get talkin' about German submarines, and the steward gives out the pleasin' information that the channel we are goin' across has got more U-boats than water in it. We gotta run all the way over in the middle of the night without no lights and take a chance that they won't see us, in which event we would get slipped a torpedo. I says I don't see why we should get sunk goin' *back* to England, when they ain't nothin' on board but wounded soldiers and women. The steward says it don't make no difference to the Germans what 's on board a ship, as long as they sink it. They get credit for every hit they make, whether it 's

a warship or a rowboat, because this big boob in Berlin thinks that kinda stuff if kept up long enough will scare the Alleys into makin' peace before we march into Berlin. Joe, he says they have been tryin' to get the boat we are on for a long time and only a week before a torpedo missed 'em by three inches and dumb luck.

The big guy gets very much interested in all of this and begins buyin' more alcohol for the steward and askin' a lot of questions. I got up and grabbed a coupla life preservers and went down to turn in just as the boat is pullin' out.

Well, Joe, I stood at the rail outside for one flash at the well-known Channel. Oh, boy! Joe, it was *some* sight! They was a heavy fog bein' had and the night is as black as ten cents' worth of stove polish — the water is blacker. I looked down at it and all along the side of the ship is little things like lightnin' bugs, flickerin' here and there among the waves. Joe, them things is some

kind of jelly fish which is like Red Huggins which used to pitch for the Cubs. In other words, they ain't no good in the daytime and get all lit up at night. Joe, I ain't yellah, but as I kept lookin' down there at that deep, black water which is rollin' past with a steady swish, swish, I felt little shivers runnin' up and down my back. You know, Joe, they is plenty of sharks and the like in the Channel, and if one of them U-boats come along — Well, Joe, Jeanne was with me too, and even you can imagine my feelin's.

They ain't a light showin' outside on the ship, and I like to broke my neck gettin' down to my stateroom, and there 's Jeanne sleepin' like a very little and very pretty baby, Joe. You would think she did n't have a care in the world, which naturally she would n't, bein' married to me. I pulled over her suit case and sat on it and, Joe, for the next hour that 's all I did. Just sit there and look at her and wonder how

in Heaven's name she ever come to marry a big boob like me and what an awful thing it 's gonna be if them German hell hounds slip us a torpedo on the way across. Then I commence to figure what I 'll do if we get hit, and I try to kid myself that they ain't no danger and, Joe, all in all, I 'm havin' one terrible night, now, believe me! I was n't so much afraid of gettin' hurled into the ocean, Joe, but I knowed what salt water would do to my uneyform, and here I faced the prospect of goin' into London lookin' like a bum!

Well, Joe, I must of fell asleep on that suit case, and when I woke up I figured the captain had lost control of the steerin' wheel and we had left the ocean flat and was finishin' the trip over the mountains. I had fell or been pushed off of the suit case, Joe, and I 'm layin' all doubled up under the bed. I got lots of company too, Joe. Everything which was n't nailed has fell on the floor, and the English Channel is bangin'

up against the portholes till I thought we was gettin' raided by some ocean-goin' cops, and every minute I expected to see axes and the like comin' through the walls. Oh, boy! This here boat was sure doin' a piece of rollin', now believe me! Comin' across the ocean was like a sail on Central Park lake alongside of this. Joe, I looked at my watch, and I seen it was half past four A. M., so I figured they was no use turnin' in then and made up my mind to go on deck where at least a man could get some air. Jeanne was still sleepin', so I got out as quiet as possible and started upstairs. Joe, if I could only repeat the funny falls I did on the way up, I could make my fortune in vaudeville when I come home. At the top of the stairs I met a steward.

"My word, but this is rippin', sir — what?" he says.

"Oh, elegant!" I says, wishin' I had denied myself supper and be done with it.

"What d' ye mean rippin'? I think it 's *rotten,* if you ask me!"

"But don't you know, sir," he says, "the more we pitch and toss, the harder it is for a submarine to score a hit?"

"No," I says, "I did n't. But if that 's on the level, I 'm willin' to go out on the rudder and help rock this thing some more myself!"

"I 'm afraid you would n't be permitted, sir," he says, without a grin. "It 's hardly within the rules. I shall speak to the captain if you awsk, though."

"Are you tryin' to kid me?" I says.

"No, sir, thank you," he says. "Do you feel like a cup of tea?"

"No," I says. "Do I look like one?"

"Haw, haw!" he says. "Only fawncy, now!" He starts down the stairs. "I say," he says, "we are right in the war zone now, and you had best wear your life preserver. Shall I fetch you one?"

"Not right away," I says. "I got *three* on now under my coat, old dear!"

Well, Joe, I managed to bang open a door and get out on deck. Oh, lady! The waves is dyin' down a little, but the smallest one I seen would make the Woolworth Buildin' look like a cube of sugar and the decks is as wet as Lake Michigan. It 's still pretty dark, and I 'm feelin' my way along, they bein' no hurry, as unfortunately, Joe, I had no place to go. All at once I see a guy loomin' up in front of us. They is somethin' familiar about him, and in another second I know he 's the bird which claimed he was a American contractor and was fillin' the steward with Red Eye. While I 'm watchin' him, Joe, he takes a flashlight outa his pocket, faces the water and commences to wave it around. It was one of the biggest I ever seen, because it throwed a glow all around the deck where he was standin'. He 'd hold it still for a minute and then shake it back and forth. I could n't figure what the idea was for a minute and then it struck me so hard I liked

to fell over the rail. Joe, *this guy was signalin' to a submarine!*

I give one jump along that deck and come down on him like a ton of bricks. He was a husky, Joe, and gimme quite a battle, even though his head hit the deck hard enough to have drove in a nail had there been one there, which unfortunately they was n't. We rolled all over the deck with this guy tryin' hard to use a gun and a coupla times I thought to myself we was sure goin' over in the deep blue. Fin'ly just as a lot of deck hands, hearin' the noise, come runnin' up, I got a left hook on his chin and he resigned.

Joe, I 'm still explainin' what happened when a dark shape looms up over the rail, and a guy with a megaphone hollers over, what the so and so do we mean by flashin' lights? It was a English destroyer, Joe, and the deck hands took me and this would-be assassin up to the bridge of our ship, and I give the captain the dope. He passed it

along to the destroyer, and in a minute they got a searchlight sweepin' the water all around us.

Joe, that water looked bad enough in the dark, but with that blindin' light on it, it looked worse! They throwed the beams back and forth for a minute, and then all of a sudden we hear them shoutin' and runnin' around on the destroyer, and a lot of guys around me which was crowded to the rail hollers that they have picked up the periscope of a U-boat. Joe, I looked where the captain pointed, and sure enough right up outa the water quite some distance away is a black iron post movin' slowly along. I 'll betcha that was the submarine this guy had signaled to, comin' up to get us. Anyhow, the destroyer cuts loose with a six-inch shell, and that periscope disappears. Whether they hit it or not, I don't know, Joe. All I know is that we got into Southampton without no further trouble. They took this other guy aboard the destroyer

after searchin' him and findin' enough stuff on him to break up a dull day for a firin' squad. I was treated like I was George W. Hero, all the way over. The people on the boat could n't do enough for me and says I had saved their lives and a lotta bunk like that. Jeanne was as proud as a infant with a new rattle, but made out she thought it was nothin'. One of the English officers' wives asked her if she did n't think it was wonderful the way we had escaped with our lives.

"*Viola!*" says Jeanne, shruggin' her shoulders and pullin' that U. S. Treasury smile. "How, then, could any danger befall us — was not Edouard with us?"

Joe, that 's the way to stand with the wiff, hey?

Still and all, the French is great kidders.

Yours truly,

Sergt. ED HARMON.

(*In my next I will tell you all about my astoundin' adventures in dear old London, Joe.*)

NINTH INNING

NINTH INNING

I

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, you perfectly priceless old thing, as we remark in Picadilly Circus, I have been to sweet old London and believe me, Joe, it is *some* burg! For one thing, it 's the first flag station I ever been in where I did n't feel like I was the original Stephen X. Wiseguy and everybody else was hicks, on account of me comin' from New York. They is more people in this London place than they is pennies in the U. S. mint, and speakin' of hustle, up to five o'clock in the afternoon London would make Manhattan look like Succotash Crossing, Ia., in the midst of a rainy Sunday. From five o'clock on, Joe, it works the other way. Don't get the idea

from this that I have gone to work and tossed my Broadway citizenship to the winds and turned English, Joe, because such is not the case. I would rather be a ash-can, especially one of them trick new ones, on Broadway, than be undisputed Emperor of any country in the world!

We got off this here boat which brung us across the channel at a certain well-known English port. I can't tell you the name of it, Joe, on account of them censors, which crosses out every seventh word in a guy's letter on general principles and then throws stove polish over the rest of it for luck. I will say though, that the place we landed at was n't either Denver or Memphis, if that 'll help you to guess it. Me and my charmin' bride, Jeanne, had no more trouble gettin' off this boat and through the English customs guys, spy hounds and passport pests, than a German band would have gettin' booked in Paris. Everybody on the dock looked over our papers once except

the porter which carried our baggage to the train. He looked at 'em twice.

We fin'ly got on the train and arrived in London without bein' torpedoed or nothin', landin' at a place called Waterloo Station. Joe, you don't get no check for your baggage in England and when the train pulls into the station a guy has got to hop off, pry open the door of the baggage car and dig out his own trunks and the like. They is generally a hundred or more trunks all piled on top of each other and I have found out they is one sure system of tellin' at a glance which is yours. It 's always the one on the bottom, Joe.

Well, Joe, I fin'ly got out our trunks and leavin' Jeanne in charge of the same, I went outside to try my luck at grabbin' a cab. Joe, the taxis here has all been drafted from the toy department of Wanamaker's or the like and they look like somethin' little Jimmy made with his trick buildin' blocks which was give him for Xmas. The bodies

is smaller than a cent's worth of gold dust and the wheels look like a set of washers for the kitchen sink. They was two of them standin' together at the curb. One of them was drove by a dame that would make Jess Willard jump outa the ring and the other was in charge of a old guy which had swore a oath at birth never to darken a barber's door or lay hands on a razor, come what may. I tossed up a coin and fortune gimme the old guy.

"What 's the best hotel in London, for all you know?" I says to him.

"Well," he says, takin' a squint at the sergeant's stripes on my sleeve and salutin', "Well, Major, I should sigh it was a matter of tiste, thank you! Neither the Savoy or the Carlton 'as been 'it yet and —"

"Wait!" I butts in, "what d' ye mean they ain't been *hit* yet?"

"Why, sir, thank you," he says, "the 'Uns 'ave been a bit active of late. We 'ave

our air raids quite regular now, sir, quite regular — thank you!"

With that, Joe, he rubs his hands together and grins, like gettin' bombed by a flock of German areyoplanes was London's idea of havin' a good time!

"How much are you gonna try and get to take me and my wife to this Savoy place?" I says.

"Two and six, colonel," he says, "thank you!"

"What d' ye mean?" I asks him, "two bucks for me and six for the wife?"

He give a laugh like a maniac, Joe.

"Ow, no sir!" he says, "two shillings and six-pence for both, captain. Shall I fetch your luggage, thank you?"

"Yeh," I says, "you 're welcome."

"Thank you!" he says.

I quit, Joe.

Well, we fin'ly get in this taxi and we 're off for the Savoy Hotel. We went through Picadilly Circus, Joe, and I must say that

Barnum & Bailey 's got a better one. But I never seen so much traffic in my life and without nobody regulatin' it. Instead of turnin' to the right all the time, you turn to the left and if you get tired of drivin' on one side of the street you simply cross over to the other, no matter how crowded it is or which way traffic is movin'. The sidewalks is so jammed with people, Joe, that they is enough walkin' along in the middle of the streets to elect Billy Sunday president of the bartender's union, if they all voted the one way. The speed limit is higher than the price of ice cream sodas in Hades and the motors in these cars is all built so 's they got to be run about ninety-four miles an hour before they get turnin' over properly. With all of this, Joe, they is hardly anybody gets run over, particularly if they stay indoors.

Joe, naturally, on account of the war they is a few things in London and Paris which they are shy of right now. But they is one

necessity which has failed to become exhausted to date over here. That is — girls! I thought they was more in Paris than they is water in the Atlantic Ocean, but London 's got Paris tied to the flag-pole when it comes to dames! These here English queens is knockouts too, Joe, and they ain't none of them would have to starve to death on account of not knowin' bookkeepin' or nothin', believe me! All I seen could make the front row of any chorus on Broadway, the day they got off the boat. They all got complexions like the dames on the massage cream cans would like to have and more curves than a scenic railway. Joe, nearly every one of them is as big as a dollar's worth of boiled rice, not fat but husky, and they have pitched in and took all the jobs over here while the men is away assassinatin' the Germans. They do everything in England from tendin' bar to runnin' munition plants, and them lords and dukes which did n't want to give them the vote before

this brawl started is willin' to give them anything they want now, outside of livin' wages.

Well, Joe, we fin'ly arrived at the Savoy Hotel, which is a swell-lookin' joint at that, bein' a cross between Rector's and the Fifth Avenue Library from the outside. I paid off our darin' chauffeur, slippin' him a shillin' for himself and family and he wished me all the luck in the world. He did n't say good or bad, Joe.

Immediately on gettin' out of the cab, a gang of guys which had ducked the draft comes runnin' outa the hotel and swoops down on us. They was all dressed like the ambassador from Flatbush or somethin', Joe, with enough gold lace and gewgaws on 'em to outfit the Knights of Pythias or Sousa's Band for a year. They turned out to be nothin' less than bellboys, the youngest of which was a gay old dog when Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden for a elevator apartment house. I seen right away

they was a lot of tip hounds and I beat 'em to it by carryin' in my own baggage. Not that I 'm tight across the chest, Joe, — you know I always been as loose as ashes with my dough. But on this here trip I 'm carryin' a set of non-refillable pockets as far as money is concerned and once they was empty I was through!

The minute I get to the desk the clerk gimme a thing to fill out that looked like a application for a job as chauffeur on a submarine. About the only thing this paper did n't want to know was how my mother first come to meet my father. It might have asked this bit of information at that — I did n't look at the back of it, Joe. Then the clerk says I gotta report to the police station the first chance I get.

"What for?" I says. "Is the Queen's necklace missin' or has somebody been knockin' me?"

"I 'ave n't 'eard, I 'm suah," says this guy, with a deliberate yawn, "all aliens

must register with the authorities. It 's the law, thank you!"

"I ain't no alien, I 'm a American, you boob!" I says.

"Quite so, thank you," he says, "therefore you 're an alien."

Joe, I 'm all set to let him have one on the chin, when the head clerk butts in and tells him that a soldier don't have to register with the police and to lay off of me. Then he says what do I wish for.

"I come in this hotel to get fitted for a pair of ice skates," I says, very sarcastical, Joe, because I 'm gettin' sore. "You did n't think I wanted a room, did you?"

"Quite so, thank you!" he says, "you require a bawth, I fancy?"

"Do I look as dirty as that?" I says.

"Beg pawdon?" he says.

"How do you know whether I need a bath or not, hey?" I hollers, Joe; I was enraged. "They ain't a mornin' goes by

that I don't frolic under the cold shower, you big stiff!"

Joe, just then they was somebody gimme a wallop on the back and I swung around to face no less than Shorty Nevins, which used to hang out with the rest of them pinochle hounds in MacGregor's in Lenox Avenue. He 's a corporal in the artillery now, Joe, can you imagine that?

"Well, well, well!" I yells, "what are you doin' over here, Shorty?"

"You heard tell of the draft, did n't you?" he says. "Who 's that swell-lookin' dame standin' there lookin' at you?"

"That 's my wife," I says, throwin' out my chest a couple of yards.

Shorty grins and lays his hand on my shoulder.

"Ed," he says, "you wanna cut out the booze! You know you never could handle it and —"

"D' ye think I 'm lyin' to you?" I butts in.

"You could make a fortune as a mind-reader," he says, "if only you tried your hand at it."

With that I called over Jeanne and introduced 'em.

"I am veree glad to meet you of a certain!" purrs Jeanne, pullin' her million-dollar smile.

"You ain't got nothin' on me!" says Shorty, lookin' like he was in a trance and turnin' the national colors. "I 'm tickled silly myself. How did you come to fall for this guy?"

"What do you care?" I says.

"Lemme alone!" says Shorty. "I got a right to find out how you done it. If you could get a girl like that to fall for *you,* think what *I* can grab when I get to France!"

"I thought you was gonna wed Annie MacGuire," I says, "that there dame which claimed her old man was one of the biggest men in Wall Street."

" I thought so, too," he says. " The only thing was I could n't get *her* to think it! That 's what beat me. She was on the level though, Ed, about her father bein' one of the biggest men in Wall Street."

" Yeh? " I says. " What is he — one of them brokers? "

" Not quite," says Shorty, " he 's a special policeman at the Equitable Buildin' and he stands six feet four without a hat on. That 's big enough, ain't it? "

" Listen! " I says. " Forget that Loew time comedy and tell me somethin'. I 'm only gonna be in London for a short time and you might as well say I 'm on my honeymoon. That bein' the case I wanna do everything first cabin regardless of the cost, if it ain't too high. Is this the swellest hotel in London or ain't it? "

" What are you askin' me? " says Shorty. " I 'm detailed to the American Headquarters here and I gotta go where they send me. The only choice I get is, I can have

two kinds of soup — hot or cold! The hotel I 'm livin' in is a outright steal from a livery stable. They is five beds in my room alone."

"That ain't no hotel," I says, "it must be a hospital. Let 's ask the clerk where all the wealthy millionaires from America and Pittsburg goes when they come to London."

With that, Joe, we went up to the desk.

"How much is a room and bath here for a American doughboy and wife?" I says. "And before answerin', remember that Rockefeller is a much older man than me and the only resemblance is that we both got two legs."

"Quite so, thank you!" he says, with what he prob'ly thought was a winnin' smile. "I have somethin' very nice left for a guinea."

"Do I look like a wop?" I says. "Where d' ye get that ginny stuff?"

"A ginny is English money, you boob!"

hisses Shorty in my ear. "Don't make this here guy think that all Americans is ig'rant."

"That will be twenty-one shillings a day, sir, thank you," butts in the clerk. "Would you like to look at your quarters?"

"You said somethin'!" I says. "I 'll take a good long look at my quarters before I slip you guys twenty-one of 'em a day. I think you must of got the price of the room and the telephone number balled up. What 's the best you can do for a Alley of yours?"

"Well, sir," he says, bendin' over and talkin' low like look out for spies, "I might reduce it to an even pound as a special favor to our American brothers-in-arms. But, I say, you 'll keep it quiet, will you?"

"You can bet the hotel on that part of it," I tells him. "D' ye think I want anybody to know I been sucker enough to give you guys five bucks a day for a place to sleep?"

"This ain't gettin' us nowheres!" butts in Shorty. "Lem*me* talk to this guy." He turns to the clerk. "Hey!" he says, "this guy here 's a friend of mine from the U. S. He used to be a big league ball-player and was knowed throughout the country as the Hetty Green of baseball. When he was makin' it, he would n't give a thin dime to see Custer's Last Stand from a box seat! That bein' the case, he 's got $1.65 for every private in the German army and what we want to know is where a guy can get a quick flash for his dough in London. What hotel does the King hang out in, for instance?"

Joe, this here clerk blinks his eyes and looks from me to Shorty for a minute without speakin'.

"His Majesty resides at Buckingham Palace," he says, very cold, Joe.

"Yeh?" says Shorty, "Buckin'ham Palace, hey? They used to be a apartment house on Seventh Avenue, near 110th Street, called that." He turns back to the clerk.

"What kind of a joint is that?" he says. "Maybe we can get fixed up there, hey?"

Joe, I thought the clerk was gonna become a victim of apoplexy and a Canadian officer standin' near us busts out laughin'.

"I 'm afraid," says the clerk, his face no redder than a fifteen-cent bottle of catsup, "I 'm afraid his Majesty is not receiving at Buckingham Palace guests who — "

"Yeh?" butts in Shorty. "Say! — don't tell me nothin' about this here George V. Gulp. He 's a good guy and as level as they make 'em! We passed in review before him and the Missus when we first come over here and he was n't a bit up-stage or nothin', simply on account of him bein' a king. Why he even come over and talked to us and says he was glad to greet us and a lotta stuff like that. I bet he 'd know me again in a minute. Yes sir, George V. is a good guy!"

Well, Joe, Jeanne is gettin' impatient so I called off the argyment and took the room.

Joe, it was *some* room at that. In fact I can say without lyin' that it was the swellest room I ever been in and it made a big hit with the wife. All the furnishin's in it was big league stuff and beside the bed they was a little marble slab with buttons on it marked, "Porter," "Maid," "Valet" and "Waiter." When you want anything, Joe, all you gotta do is push one of them buttons; telephone down to the office, go out in the hall and yell for service and then go and get whatever you want yourself.

We went down and had dinner that night at a joint called Simpson's, which is on the Strand. All the Americans eat there, because the guys which writes them high society novels always claims that the hero dropped in Simpson's for a bite. Joe, they got the last part right anyways, because a bite is about all a guy can grab over here now. They seems to be plenty of food, but they are dealin' it out very slow and careful because the bulk of it 's goin' to feed

the soldiers, — and why not? Joe, I hope you guys over in the U. S. is not wastin' the eats on us whilst we are over here fightin' for the Democrats. Remember, us doughboys is doin' without a lotta things, some of us goin' so far as to do without our *lives,* Joe, so you guys can live in peace and quiet. Don't kick either, Joe, if you have to eat black bread — *they're feedin' us bullets over here!*

Yours truly,
Sergeant Ed Harmon.

(*Where does the Giants stand now, Joe?*)

II

Vivela, France.

DEAR JOE: Well, Joe, I had to break my last letter off kinda short on account of bein' ordered to patrol duty. Me and ten other guys went out to do a piece of scoutin' and right off the reel we run into a bunch of squareheads doin' the same thing. In a minute the air was full of bullets and cries of "Kamerad!" and we brung back six Germans. Three of them was alive. But to get back to London — me and Jeanne was so tired out with the journey from France, etc., that we went right to bed the first night we was there almost as soon as we eat. I ain't had the light lit in our room a minute before they 's a knockin' at the door. I opened up and there 's a guy all dressed up like a Turkish admiral or a

Fifth Avenue carriage caller. He claims he 's the head porter.

" I 'm sorry, sir," he says, " but it 's against the regulations to show a light from your room, thank you! "

" Why? " I says, " it ain't shinin' in nobody's eye, is it? "

" It 's on account of the beastly 'Uns, sir," he says. " Since they been coming over with their bloomin' baby killers we cawn't show no lights, sir. It might 'elp them to locate the 'otel and bomb it. We look for a raid to-night, sir, it bein' so bright and all."

" Oh, you look for a raid to-night, hey? " I says. " Well, don't stage none on my account; I 'd just as soon do without it! However," I goes on, slippin' him a piece of silver which was either a six-pence, a shillin', a half-crown or a florin, for all I knowed, " however, if them guys does come over, keep it quiet, will you? Don't come runnin' up here with no alarms or nothin'

— I don't want my wife to know we 're bein' raided. It might scare her."

"Quite so, thank you," he says, goin' south with the coin; "but I 'm afraid, sir, if the 'Uns comes over it 'll be 'ard to keep the fact from the lidy. They usually drop about twenty tons of 'igh explosives and then there 's our anti-aircraft guns. I assure you sir, the din is terrific. Yes sir, thank you!"

Twenty tons of high explosives, Joe. Oh, boy!!!

"Well?" says Jeanne, when he had beat it, "what now, *chérie?*"

"Nothin'," I says, "that guy told me today was the king's favorite birthday and naturally enough they 're gonna shoot off a lotta roman candles and the like to celebrate it, to-night. He says if they is undue noise not to pay no attention to it — that 's all!"

"But *chérie!*" says Jeanne, jumpin' up with her eyes dancin' like a kid's, "I will

then not retire. I would be delight to see these roman candle!"

"Listen!" I says, "let's let it go at *hearin'* 'em to-night, heh? You don't wanna see no fireworks, wait 'til we get back to the dear old *Etats Unis* and I'll show you Coney Island."

Joe, just then they is a lotta whistles begin blowin' in the streets and we can hear guys yellin', "Take cover!" I put out the lights in the room and we both looked out the window down into the Strand. Well, Joe, it was *some* sight! Taxis and busses is dashin' along, most of 'em drove by girls and people is scurryin' in all directions. The streets is as black as pitch. They is a swell-lookin' dame in evenin' clothes talkin' to a English officer outside the hotel and they is both about as much disturbed by the excitement all around them as a elephant would be if a moth lit on its back. "Stick to it!" hollers this dame to a girl drivin' a bus and "Cheero!" the girl hollers back.

Pretty soon, Joe, there is hardly anybody in the street below except them which has crowded into doorways to watch the show. Joe, I did n't have to be no Sherlock Holmes to know what was comin' and I drawed Jeanne away from the window, because shrapnel cuts and tears like Hades. We had hardly sit down when they is a terrible crash that rocks the room and all the glass in the windows comes tinklin' in on the floor. Then — Oh, boy!!!! Joe, the front ain't got a thing on London, believe me! They was crash after crash and boom after boom and in between that come the sharp cracklin' hiss of machine guns. The explosions was so close together that it was hard to say when one begun and the other left off and they kept that up for over a hour. I made Jeanne sit in the middle of the room away from the windows and Joe, I prayed to the Lord that them squarehead dogs would n't hit the hotel with a lucky shot. In the meanwhile, I try and kid her

into thinkin' that this ain't nothin' but a fireworks celebration. I had a fat chance!

"Well, honey," I says, pullin' what I thought was a pleasant grin, "it seems a shame to waste all that dough on fireworks to celebrate the king's birthday, with money so tight now, hey?"

Joe, she looked at me with that odd little smile of hers and then she come over and sit on my lap.

"*Chérie*," she says, snugglin' up to me — and why not? — "do not try me to deceive wiz that talk of the firework. That boo-oo-om!!!! — I have hear too often not to know him. That is not for the what you say celebration — that is to kill! That is the *boche, n'est ce pas?*"

"You win!" I says, "but don't be scared now, kid, they ain't a thing gonna hurt you whilst I 'm here. At the same time — let 's beat it down to the cellar, they gotta bomb-proof down there and —"

Joe, she jumps up off of my lap and her face turns as red as a rose, only prettier.

"Edouard!" she says, throwin' back her little shoulders, "you would then have *me* — *un Française* — flee from the *boche cochon?* Nevaire! I would of the certain die before the *Allemagne* shall make me run!"

"But listen!" I says, as a bomb drops somewheres around the corner and four pictures and the chandelier comes down on the floor, "the Germans can't see you, honey. They won't know whether you run or not."

"Ah!" she says, "but *I* would know it — and it would kill me!"

Oh, boy! *Some* wife, hey Joe?

Well, they was nothin' I could do after that but stay there and hope we did n't get hit. Joe, it 's a million times worse than the front-line trenches under bombardment, because there you would have a gun and could at least come back at them square-

heads. In London all you can do is cuss and hope you don't get it — that 's all! Joe, it is tough on the nerves and if you could even blow putty balls at 'em it would be a relief; get me?

Well, fin'ly everything got quiet again and we knowed the air raid was over. As usual, them hell-hounds killed a lot of women and babies and hit all the places which had Red Cross signs painted on top of 'em. That 's their specialty, Joe, hittin' hospitals. They figure the shock will kill the wounded and guys just comin' out of ether after an operation. Nurses is considered big game. Joe, maybe you can imagine now why it 's so hard at the front to keep from goin' over the top and assassinatin' them birds night and day — without waitin' for no orders! Them guys ain't human and I seen too many good animals in my time to call 'em brutes. Joe, them guys is devils from Hell broke loose for a field day and, believe me, before we get

through with 'em they 'll all be back where they come from, the head fiend in Berlin and all!

They don't scare nobody with this air raid stuff, Joe, and they don't do no military damage. All they do is to make the English people stand solidly together to help win the war and run them guys off the earth. One air raid on London is worth forty speeches in Parliament to the English for recruitin' purposes, Joe, believe me!

Well, after it was all over they was another knock at the door and there is friend head porter again. Joe, he 's as bright and smilin' as if he had just come from the races and had made the bookmakers holler for the cops.

" Well, sir," he says, with a grin, " 't was quite a lark, eh? I never 'eard such bloomin' noise in all me life. And did you see the star shells burst in the air? My eye, it beats Drury Lane to nothink, what? "

"Where was you," I says, "when them bombs was droppin'?"

"Me, sir?" he says, "I was up on the roof of the 'otel with the maids, a-watchin' it. It 's about all the pleasure I get now, sir. I cawn't go much to the music 'alls any more. I lost my boy at Ypres — and — well, I 'm supportin' 'is wife, sir."

Joe, can you imagine this bird goin' up on a roof to watch bombs drop around him instead of goin' to a show? And them squareheads in Berlin think they got England scared silly! Say, Joe, listen! Before I come over here I was n't really in love with the English myself, the same as a lot of us. But I 've met 'em, lived with 'em and fought with 'em since — and Joe, I 'm strong for 'em! They fight like Hades, share their last nickel with you and they know every word in the dictionary except fear! Joe, you wanna remember that the Revolutionary War was pulled off several weeks before any of the present population

of the U. S. was born, so let bygones be bygones and string along with the English. They 're good, game guys and regular fellers from the toes up!

Well, Joe, the next mornin' who comes around to the hotel but Shorty Nevins again. He 's as excited as a busher in his first big league uneyform and he claims he 's gonna ask me a favor, which if I refuse it he 's off of me for life.

" Shorty," I says, " I hate to turn down a friend, especially one which is so far from home and Times Square. I 'll let you have ten bucks American money and that 's the limit, if eleven would save your aged parents from bein' dispossessed! "

" I was n't even thinkin' of makin' a touch," he says, " but now that you mention it and brung it to my mind, I 'll take the ten and much obliged. What I 'm gonna ask of you is somethin' different."

" Well, what is it? " I says, slippin' him five. " You got me so worked up already,

that if you don't tell me in a minute I 'll die from simple curiosity."

" I want you to pitch a game of ball! " he says.

Joe, you could of knocked me over with a six-inch shell!

" You want me to *pitch?* " I gasps. " Where is they any baseball bein' had over here? "

" The main and first thing I wanna know," he says, " is, will you do it? "

Joe, here 's a guy over in London askin' *me,* which was form'ly without no peers as a baseball pitcher, if I wanna pitch! Joe, I would of willin'ly give five hundred bucks to even hear Silk O'Loughlin or the like, callin' bum decisions on me! I ain't seen a home plate since I blowed a farewell kiss to the Statue of Liberty. Do I wanna pitch? Oh, boy!!!!!

" Well, what d' ye say? " says Shorty. " Come through — will you pitch or won't you? "

" Shorty," I says, " is it true the ocean is full of water or ain't it? Look here, you little fathead, if you 're kiddin' me about this I 'll run you outa London and — "

" Lay off," he says, " and I 'll give you the dope. Here 's where I clean up a bankroll! "

Well, Joe, we sit down in the lobby and he tells me they is a game arranged between a team representin' the navy and one representin' the army to be played in London for the benefit of the Red Cross. All the Americans in London will be there, also all the swell English guys from the king down or up — whichever way they run now. All in all, he says, they will be more people there than they is in Chicago and every nickel is to go to the Red Cross. The U. S. sailors in London has got everything but their uneyforms bet on their team and the doughboys has mortgaged their wages for several years in advance to take the bets.

" They think we ain't got nobody to pitch

but a guy named Wilkins," winds up Shorty, "and while this guy is a willin' feller, he ain't never hurled no professional ball and if he's a pitcher I'm a plate of duck soup! Think of them sailors when we trot *you* out in the box, hey?"

"But look here," I says, "that ain't fair, is it? Stackin' a lotta amateurs up against *me* and takin' their dough?"

"You been hangin' out in Sunday-schools again, hey?" he sneers. "Well, don't worry about that part of it — you'll be pitchin' to a lot of your friends!"

"Whaddeye mean?" I says.

"Listen!" he says, pullin' a sheet of paper from his pocket. "Here's the line-up of the navy team you're gonna pitch against: Catcher, Joe Huggins, form'ly with the Giants; Pitcher, Red O'Hara, which was the Cubs' $10,000 beauty 'til along come the draft; First Base, Slippers Higgins; Second Base, Joe Lait; Third Base, Ed Greer — all direct from the Pitts-

burg Pirates by way of the recruitin' office, Short Stop, Willie Meehan, form'ly of the Braves. The outfield is made up of simon pure sailors. They won't give you no trouble."

Joe, I liked to fell off of the chair!

"D'ye expect me to go in and win a ball game against a team like that?" I hollers. "Why them birds could win a world's series. I ain't pitched no ball for months!"

"That's all right!" he grins, "some of them guys never played ball in their lives and you know it. Simply because they drawed wages in the big leagues don't make 'em ball-players, does it?"

Well, Joe, we argued back and forth for a hour and fin'ly I fell. The main thing that decided me was that I wanted Jeanne to see just what her husband done for a livin' before the Kaiser went bughouse. I knowed that even if I was outa trainin' I could merely toy with these guys and if we

had even *one* more ball-player on our team we 'd win on the bit.

Well, Joe, Jeanne gets all dolled up and we grab a taxi out to the place they was using as a ball-park. Although they was almost two hours to come and go before the game started, the place was jammed tight with people. The most of them was soldiers and sailors, both English and American, but they was plenty of everything else, too. I went back of the grandstand and warmed up with Shorty for awhile and then we went over so 's I could get introduced to my club-mates. They was all tickled silly when they found out who was gonna pitch for them and the general indications was, Joe, that a pleasant time would be had by all.

Well, Joe, they was a lotta English soldiers marched across the diamond headed by a band and after that come a auto containin' no less than the king and queen of England and some more of the royal fam-

ily, no doubt the ace, jack and ten. Everybody stood up and sung "God Help the King" the tune of which is a steal from "My Country 'T is of Thee" and then they tried out the "Star-Spangled Banner." Havin' got that all over with, the umpire, a guy named Haines which used to call the balls in the Tri-State League and is now on a submarine chaser, give out the batteries. In order that the navy would n't know who I was, my name was give out as Allen. They went to bat first.

The first guy up, Joe, is Joe Lait, the ex-Pirate. You remember how that baby could murder a inshoot, so I let him have my fast one with everything on it but the park. He missed it from here to Salt Lake City and then he pulls up and laughs.

"So your name is Allen now, hey?" he calls at me. "All right, Mister Ed Harmon, if you 're as rotten as you was in the big league I oughta have a field day.

Gimme another one of them fast babies and I 'll lay it in the bleachers! "

" Cast your eye over this one then, stupid! " I hollers, and feed him a wicked outshoot.

I don't know what he did with his eye, Joe, but he cast his *bat* over it and for all I know it come down in Africa for the first bounce! The crowd went wild and they did n't have nothin' on me. I passed the next two guys, beaned the next and the fifth guy doubles. Before they got through with me the score was 4–0, favor them.

Well, Joe, the mob begins to ride me and the army team with all their dough on me would of willin'ly murdered me in cold blood. A big husky from Nebraska which was playin' short, claims he 'll bay'net me right in front of the grandstand and King George V if I lose them the game. Of course, with all this stuff, Joe, I 'm about as cool as the inside of a blast furnace, and

when Jeanne innocently says I had oughta stand further away from the batters, because I 'm liable to get trampled on in the rush to first base — well, Joe, I was a ravin' maniac!

I managed to pull myself together, Joe, and they did n't get another hit for seven innin's. As far as them sailors was concerned, the bases could of been in Baltimore and a team of armless wonders could of fouled more than *they* hit. We grabbed off a run in the fourth and three more in the sixth, tyin' the game up and that 's the way we started the ninth.

They come up first and by that time, Joe, I had everything! I fanned the first three guys on ten pitched balls and then we come to bat. The first two guys up for us give a imitation of a gate and swung at everything which come over. Result, two out — none on. Just as I stepped up to the platter, I hear the crowd yellin' and I see they 're all lookin' up in the air. I did the same, Joe,

and they 's about thirty areyoplanes flyin' over the field, very high up and goin' very slow. O'Hara slipped a strike over on me whilst I was watchin' 'em and then Joe, they 's some more yellin' and shoutin' goes up from the grandstand. Constables starts runnin' around bawlin' " Take cover! " and the soldiers begins herdin' the mob together and clearin' a space for the king's auto. I don't quite get the idea 'til a guy goes tearin' past me yellin' " It 's the Huns! "

Oh, boy!!!!!!

Joe, in another minute them squareheads, which must of been tipped off that the king was gonna be there, begins droppin' bombs! It was only the second time since they been raidin' London that they come over in the day-time and I heard afterwards they had got away with it by camouflagin' their areyoplanes to look like the English and French, even paintin' the signs on the sides and bottom. Before the English is wise and can go up after them or open up with

their anti-aircraft guns, Joe, they drop over forty bombs in and around the ball-park.

Well, Joe, the attendance disappears like magic and within ten minutes they was n't nobody on the field but the two teams and about three hundred soldiers and sailors which had their dough on the result of this here game and was there to see the finish — air raid or not! A bomb fell in the outfield and blowed away part of the fence and I started over in the crowd to hunt for Jeanne, prayin' for the best.

Shorty Nevins rushes over and grabs me.

" Stand up to the plate, you big stiff! " he bawls, " your wife is O. K. I took her down in a bomb-proof cellar and she could n't get hurt if she tried! She 's *some* dame — and if you got half her nerve we 'll cop this game and the large dough! The sailors is crazy over their money and they won't let the umpire call the thing off, it 's gotta be finished now! Never mind them bombs, them squareheads could n't hit a barn with

a shotgun. The rest of the guys has agreed to play for this one out and if you get a hit we 'll win!"

Joe, just then another bomb drops in the bleachers, which fortunately is empty and Zam-m-m-m!!!! Gooda bye!

"I 'm liable to lose my life, you little simp!" I hollers, "standin' here with them bombs —"

"Never mind your life!" bellers Shorty, "we 're liable to lose about three hundred bucks apiece. If you get nailed we 'll give your wife a cut of our winnin's!"

Zam-m-m-m!!!! goes another bomb and the outfielders run in around short.

Joe, can you imagine me standin' up there tryin' to hit a ball with them Huns droppin' bombs all around us? And think of the guy that 's tryin' to pitch strikes at me, hey? Joe, nobody but bughouse Americans would of done that, hey?

Well, Joe, I get set and the gang tries to rattle me by screamin' that I 'm so scared

of the bombs that I can't hit nothin'. Joe, I did n't mind the bombs, but them guys tryin' to upset me and hollerin' that I 'm yellah, got my goat for real! I nailed the first ball that come over right on the trade mark, aimin' it up in the air at them squareheads and it was thirty feet outside the park when it first touched dirt!

The gang goes wild and I start around what 's left of the bases. When I 'm passin' second, a bomb falls near the home plate and the catcher missed gettin' his permanent release by about three feet. I seen he was n't hurt and I stopped runnin'.

"They ain't no use!" he yells at me, "you can't win the game anyways. The rules says you gotta touch the home plate to score a run and they ain't no plate left here for you to touch!"

"I got the ball!" yells the short stop and starts runnin' over to tag me out.

Well, Joe, I was up against it. The bomb had blowed the home plate away and this

guy with the ball was between me and third. If he put that pill on me, it 's all over. Not knowin' what to do, I begin to run again and him after me and the umpire after both of us. I run around in circles, duckin' this short stop 'til I managed to touch third. Then I run around some more, Joe, duckin' him and the bombs 'til we was all leg weary and the gang is doubled up with the hysterics. Fin'ly when I could hardly stand up I seen a little iron square layin' on the ground right in the pitcher's box. I made one dive for it and fell on top of it. The next minute this guy puts the ball on me!

"You lose!" he pants, outa breath.

"Yeh?" I says. "We *win!* Look what I got!" I held up the iron plate for the umpire to see. Joe, it was the home plate, blowed all the way out to the box by a bomb!

"Safe!" says the umpire. "Harmon 's right! The rules says if the home plate should become dislodged, a base runner

may touch it and score wherever it may be. I seen it layin' there and I was wonderin' if this guy had brains enough to do it. C'mon now, let 's get away from here. The army wins!"

Joe, you should of seen what the English papers said about that game. I think we would of all got medals from the king if he had n't been short of them at the time!

Well, Joe, the high life is over now and I gotta go back to the pleasant occupation of killin' Huns. I see the captain comin' over to me, so I 'll close right here. Say! Keep this under your hat — me and Jeanne is gonna have a little surprise for you pretty soon.

Yours truly,

ED HARMON.

P.S. Oh gee, Joe — I got my commission!

Sarah Edwards